WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE

DAVID JAMES BURRELL

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WHY I BELIEVE THE BIBLE

By

David James Burrell, D. D.

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BY

DAVID JAMES BURRELL

Pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, New York

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THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED TO
OUR OLD-FASHIONED MOTHERS
WHO, WITH ALL THEIR KNOWING,
"JUST KNOW THEIR BIBLES TRUE"
AND LIVE THAT WAY

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I might almost say to the Lord,
" Here is a tribute to thy Word,
Written out with much toil and pain:
Take it, O Lord, and let it be
As something I have done for thee."

—Adapted from *Friar Pacificus.*

FOREWORD

A BOY who had been dedicated to the ministry at birth and constantly kept in remembrance of that fact by a pious mother left home at sixteen to prepare himself for the work before him. On being exposed to the adverse winds of current unbelief he drifted from the moorings of faith little by little until, at the conclusion of his college course, he found himself without chart or compass on an open sea.

The choice of a profession was then before him. Not without an inward struggle he resolved to enter upon a theological course in the hope of regaining a sufficient measure of faith to warrant his going on. It was a foregone conclusion that the experiment would fail. No man in such a quicksand can recover his footing by a dead lift; any more than a planet which has swerved from its orbit can automatically save itself from exile in infinite space.

Those were dreary years; four miserable years of evasion, of compromise with conscience, of vain efforts to travel in "the middle of the road." It was a hopeless case. There is no middle of the road. If Christ was not what he claimed to be but only a man, justly condemned to death for "making himself equal with God"; if the Bible is not what it claims to be but a mere book among books, to be laughed out of court for

assuming to have been "written by holy men as they were moved by the Spirit of God"; if the manger and the Cross and the open sepulchre are to be explained away as figments of the imagination, without basis in fact or any practical bearing on the life here or hereafter; what need is there of the ministry or what excuse can be offered for entering it?

So the young man reasoned within himself that, with all the avenues of strenuous life open before him, he would obviously be a fool to choose a ministry without a message and a knave to assume vows which were better kept in the breach than in the observance. Thus doubting and questioning this "candidate for holy orders" stood at the crossing of the ways.

Just then he was unexpectedly called to minister at a deathbed. An old Scotchman, who had been trained at a Highland fireside but had wandered far from the landmarks of truth and righteousness, was looking into the dark with frightened eyes. All night long he kept saying, "Tell me how to face God! Is there a God? Was Christ his only-begotten Son? Did he die for me? Can his blood cleanse from all sin? Read me what the Bible says about it.—But wait; is the Bible true? They say it's no better than any other book. What do you think? Man, I am dying! Don't trifle now. Tell me."

All night long! Put yourself in the place of that young man. What would you have done? At daybreak he found himself on his knees, humbled and put to shame by the manifest interposition of a loving God. In trying to tell a sinner how to die he had himself found out how to live. At daybreak, by the

side of the dead, the living stood up and praised God.

The doorway into the ministry was now open before him. With Christ as his Saviour and the Bible as an infallible rule of faith and conduct, he could assume the vows of his ordination with the clear conscience of an honest man. He had his message to deliver as an ambassador of Christ; a message involving the issues of eternal life. Whether he would preach or not was no longer an open question: he must preach, because he had something to say, something worth while, something with the sanction of a Thus saith the Lord behind it.

Half a century has passed since these things happened. The young preacher in the meantime has attended many deathbeds and ministered to multitudes of the living; nor has he ever wavered in his conviction that Christ is faithful and that the Bible is a dependable book to live by and die by.

D. J. B.

New York

I

THE ANTECEDENT PRESUMPTION

IF I regarded the Scripture as a mingled tissue of truth and falsehood or as merely "containing" a less or greater modicum of truth, I could not as an honest man say that I believe it. But I do believe it: and I mean precisely what I say. To my mind the Book is not true in spots, but true and trustworthy from beginning to end.

And this is the historic faith of the Christian Church all along the ages. The enemies of the Bible make so much noise at times that old-fashioned believers are moved to lament as Elijah did under the juniper-tree, "They have forsaken thy Covenant and thrown down thine altars; and I even I only am left"; but battles are not won with wind instruments; and neither faith nor reason builds its altars under juniper-trees. There are multitudes in Israel who have not bowed their knees to Baal. The shouting and the tumult cease; but truth and righteousness fight on to certain victory in the long run.

It is a great thing to be a conservative: not inactively, like reservoirs of still water, but progressively, like rivers that keep within their banks while rolling on toward the sea. We are bound to move with the moving world, providing we do not move away from the immovable faith which was "once for all deliv-

ered to the saints." We must needs keep open house for Truth but by the same token we are bound to double-bolt our doors when Falsehood knocks and cries, "Let me in!"

Whether a man believes his Bible or rejects it, two things may be fairly required of him. On the one hand he must frankly and truthfully state his position, without mumbling or mouthing; and on the other he must be able always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason for it.

There is something to be said, before we go a step further, about the reasonableness of looking for a Revelation of some sort. This, while it proves nothing, will prepare the way for positive propositions further on.

The presumption runs on this wise, *If there is a God anywhere in the universe, and if that God is our Father, he would certainly not leave us in doubt as to the great problems in which are involved the issues of eternal life.*

If it is reasonable to expect an earthly father to comfort his children in distress by assuring them of his wise purposes concerning them, our Father in heaven would certainly do no less. (Matthew 7: 11.)

If a well disposed king puts up finger-boards to guide wayfarers through the dense forests and along the perplexing roads of his domain, the King of kings would assuredly not leave his subjects to wander at their wits' end.

Plato lamented that he was adrift upon a raft with no rudder at hand nor guiding star before him; yet even he, pagan though he was, ventured the hope that

the gods would some time "give us a good staunch boat to sail in." This was the expression of a universal instinct. Assuming a God, it would appear that somewhere there must be a clear and distinct Revelation not only of himself but of his beneficent plans and purposes concerning us.

So much for the antecedent presumption. We shall now place over against it the *Claim of the Bible itself* to be precisely such a Revelation as would be expected of a just and loving God.

II

THE CLAIM: IS IT VERIFIED?

THE claim of the Book is threefold; and it is expressed in no uncertain terms:

First: it claims to be inspired. Nor does it leave us in the least possible doubt as to what it means by "inspiration." The word is *theopnustia,* literally, "breathed of God." (II Timothy 3:16.)

I breathe upon a window on a frosty morning and leave there a lace-work picture of turreted palaces and landscapes and armies marching to battle with diamond-pointed spears. So God once breathed through human lips upon a series of parchments which are called the Scriptures. The deposit left upon those original parchments was the very breath (*pneuma*) of God. Wherefore it must have been inerrant truth; since it is unthinkable that God should breathe a lie.

Second: the Book claims to be inspired in a definite and singular way: namely, "The prophecy came not at any time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved (or borne onward) by the Spirit (*pneuma,* 'the breath') of God." (II Peter 1:21.)

It thus appears that the sacred writers were something more than mere amanuenses. While free to express the divinely-revealed truth in their own words and according to their own mental processes, they were

so "borne onward" by the Holy Spirit as to be safeguarded, on the one hand, against all possible error and directed, on the other, into a clear statement of truth precisely as God would have it.

Third: this singular claim is made for all Scripture, as it is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (II Timothy 3: 16.)

In other words, there can be no picking and choosing from among the Scriptures, as when one orders a dinner *à la carte* saying, "I like this" and "I do not care for that." The table is divinely spread and all its viands are nutritious; not all alike or equally so for the building up of the same parts and processes of life, but some for doctrine, others for reproof and correction, still others for instruction in righteousness; none being without its distinct and definite uses.

The words quoted from II Timothy 3 will bear a little further looking into. They were addressed to the young pastor of the Christian Church in Ephesus. He was surrounded by divers temptations. Ephesus was the chief emporium for a considerable portion of the trade of Asia; a resort for fashionable people who wished to lose themselves in the whirl of vicious indulgence; and also a distinguished seat of pagan learning. The young pastor had, therefore, to meet all the allurements incident to the prevalent vogue of sordid business, carnal pleasure and worldly wisdom. But against these he was fortified by the training which he had received not merely from Paul, his spiritual

foster-father, but from his mother Eunice and from another elect-lady, his grandmother Lois. By these he had been instructed in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make men wise unto salvation and to enhearten them for the stress of daily life.

In this letter of Paul's, full of faithful counsel and admonition, he bade the young minister be mindful of those rudiments of faith and morals which had thus been imparted to him: "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of."

How many a youth in the hurly-burly of metropolitan life has need of similar counsel in these days! Never in the history of the world has there been a time when the young and unwary were confronted by temptations more alluring than now. The life of commerce makes its vociferous claims; the life of pleasure beckons from doorways and windows along the way; and presumptuous Folly, arrayed in the garb of Wisdom, stands at the corners of the streets crying aloud that the old truths are superannuated, that the Bible is untrustworthy, that religion is but a refined form of superstition and that "the spirit of the age" is more important than the Spirit of God.

Now let the hallowed past stand forth to help and strengthen! Let memory recall the voice of the dear mother who, as Cowper says, "just knew, and knew no more, her Bible true!" Let the voice of the village preacher, far away in the glamour of the vanished past, be heard again, commending the Cross, the old-fashioned Book and the precepts of a holy life!

O men and women, let us continue in the things

which we have learned and been assured of! Why should we be swept from our moorings by every contrary wind of destructive teaching? Let us stand by our principles, if we have any. Let us hew to the line of our convictions. So shall the truths which have commended themselves to the thoughtful world for centuries be ours, to serve as an anchor of our souls both sure and steadfast, taking hold of that which is within the veil. Unless we are fully persuaded that our forbears were simple folk and that the Church of the centuries has been imposed on by a system of "cunningly devised fables," it behooves us to respect the ancient landmarks and, chiefest among them, the Bible. To abandon that is to be without an anchor in the storm: adrift upon an open sea.

But the question now confronts us, *Does the Book verify its claim?*

Suppose we treat that question precisely as if it were pending in a court of justice. The evidence is to be submitted to a jury of fair-minded men. Two things are necessarily assumed at the outset. One is that the minds of these jurymen shall be clear of prejudice. Otherwise, to proceed with the argument would be as hopeless as was Galileo's attempt to prove the existence of the moons of Jupiter to a body of inquisitors who refused to look through his telescope for fear they should have no case against him.

The other prerequisite on the part of these jurymen is that each shall do his own thinking. The jury system is rightly regarded as one of the necessary pillars of any Commonwealth founded on the rights of man. It has been said that "the entire Con-

stitution of England, with its balances and complications and delicate adjustments, was framed for the main purpose of impanelling twelve honest men and true." The business of the presiding judge is to hold the balances and interpret the law. The attorneys are in honour bound to argue the case on its merits. The witnesses are sworn to speak "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth." And the twelve honest men and true are enjoined to find a verdict in accordance with the law and evidence bearing on the matter in hand. The ideal is perfect; its object being to secure equal and impartial justice for all sorts and conditions of men.

In practice, however, the system does not always attain this end. It frequently happens that a jury cannot agree. There is a difference of opinion as to the application of the law or the weight of evidence in the case. The foreman advises the court accordingly and is instructed to return and inform his associates that they must agree. Thereupon the majority argue with the minority and perhaps succeed in "talking them around"—all but one. This stubborn fellow holds out. The result is a "hung jury"; and the case is set for retrial or given up.

I sing the praises of that stubborn man. Many a life, trembling in the balance has been saved by him. He is true to himself and to the right of the matter, as God gives him to see it. He does his own thinking; declines to farm out his brain and conscience to others. He is a true man, an independent man, a necessary man, a mighty man.

His value has been approved in many of the great

crises of history. In the beginning of the Christian Church a man of this character was needed to antagonize the false teachers who, under the leadership of Arius, assailed the deity of Christ. The man appeared in the person of Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, who was repeatedly exiled and ceaselessly persecuted for his unswerving devotion to reason and conscience. The errorists of the Church were against him; the influence of many in ecclesiastical authority was against him; the power of the Empire was against him. On being advised by certain of his friends that "the world was against him," he made the memorable reply, "Then I am against the world!" Who shall estimate the influence of that lone juryman? The time-servers who weakened are forgotten; but *Athanasius contra mundum* is immortalized in the poetic justice of history. His monument is the Athanasian Creed, in which millions of Christians pay tribute to the heroism of one who would not "bow the pregnant hinges of his knees that thrift might follow fawning." All honour to such men!

There has never been a time when the call for such independent thinkers was louder than just now. This is true not only in social and political affairs but pre-eminently in the province of religion. And back of all religious problems in this province is that of Biblical authority: because if the Scriptures are not reliable we have absolutely no ultimate standard by which to determine the truth or falsity of any religious thesis.

What we want, then, for the business immediately in hand, is a panel of unbiased and independent jury-

men. In other words, they must be "honest doubters."

Let there be no mistake at this point, however; for many a man who thinks himself an honest doubter is in fact a confirmed and stubborn unbeliever. It has been said that "doubt is either the agony of a noble soul or the frivolity of a fool." An honest doubter is one who, realizing the importance of a right settlement of an important issue, rests not day nor night until he arrives at the truth concerning it. He puts away all preconceptions and, with a clear conscience and a single purpose, addresses himself to the problem before him.

Is the reader thus prepared to canvass the evidence? Is his mind free from bias and open to conviction? If not, he is peremptorily challenged; because no amount of argument based on facts can enable him to pass an honest judgment upon the merits of the case. If, however, he is sure of his unbiased sincerity in the serious quest of truth, he is competent to hear the evidence and pass upon it.

One of the great discourses of Christ, in which he stated the authority of his teaching, is recorded in the seventh chapter of John. He was speaking in the Porch of the Temple to a company of people who were divided in their opinion concerning him. There were some who believed that his teaching was true and that he was what he claimed to be. There were others, including the Scribes and Pharisees, who were so opposed to him that they were even then plotting to kill him. The Teacher himself put the case calmly and dispassionately before them on this wise: "If any

man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God."

Are we thus willing to follow the direction of the divine will in order that we know whether the teaching is of God? If so, we may proceed with the hearing of the case; otherwise we might as well call a halt here and now; because "a man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still."

III

AN UNACCOUNTABLE UNITY

IT is difficult if not impossible to account for the singular unity of the Scriptures without according to them a divine origin.

Here is a volume made up of sixty-six books, on a large variety of themes, composed by forty odd writers of various tongues and nationalities, writing at intervals along a period of sixteen hundred years and representing all degrees of racial development from semi-barbarism to the highest degree of culture; yet, strange to tell, these sixty-six books when bound togther constitute a harmonious and consistent whole; yielding one system of doctrine, one code of ethics and, thus, one "rule of faith and practice" for all the children of men.

Shall we call this a fortuitous circumstance? The folly of such a statement would immediately be recognized in any other province. If forty odd persons of different tongues and degrees of musical education were to pass through the organ-loft of a church at long intervals and, without any possibility of collusion, strike sixty-six notes which, when combined, should yield the theme of an oratorio, it is respectfully submitted that the man who regarded that as "a fortuitous circumstance" would by universal consent be regarded as—to put it mildly—sadly defi-

cient in common sense. The conclusion from such a harmonious combination would be irresistible, namely, that one controlling mind, and that of a great tone-master, was behind it.

The Bible is in two volumes. The first of these is called the Old Testament and the second the New. In certain quarters there is a disposition to accept the latter while practically rejecting the former as having little or no value for modern readers. Not long ago, in a convention of Sunday-school teachers, a clergyman is reported to have said: "The Old Testament is out of date: let me have a few of the Psalms and a chapter or two of Isaiah and I have no further use for it." There are not many ministers or laymen, probably, who would be willing to speak so frankly; but an impression of this sort has gone abroad, and the consequent neglect of the Old Testament is so prevalent that a consideration of the subject in this connection may not be unprofitable for us.

Let us affirm, therefore, that the Old Testament is not only an essential and inseparable part of the Bible but that it perfectly accords and symphonizes with the New Testament. The plot of a connected story runs through both volumes, to wit, the story of the Cross: and so connectedly that no coherent or consecutive view of the divine plan of salvation can be gained without an understanding of both. The New Testament is woven into the Old Testament like the warp of a fabric into its woof: or, to use the words of Augustine, "The New Testament is enfolded in the Old and the Old Testament is unfolded in the New."

The sum and substance of both volumes is briefly comprehended in the saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The story opens at the gateway of Paradise where, at the moment when our first parents sinned against God, the protevangel was given, "The Seed of woman shall come in the fulness of time to bruise the serpent's head." The red trail of the atoning blood can be traced thenceforth through all the pages of the Book. The plot thickens, as we read on and on, through Chronicle and Psalm and Prophecy, until, with Israel's abandonment of the Messianic hope, the lights in the Temple go out and the darkness deepens into an Egyptian night of four hundred years—a night which is broken at length by the shining of the Star of Bethlehem and the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men!"

By this it is evident that the worthies of the olden time were saved precisely as we are. The Old Testament, known as The Book of the Law, was a "schoolmaster to lead them to Christ." The first sinner had a foregleam of the Saviour. The patriarchs "rejoiced to see his day." The faithful who gathered about the brazen altar were sufficiently initiated into the mystery of the sacrificial Lamb of God. Such ancients as Abraham and David and Isaiah were Christians as really as we are; only they looked forward to the sacrifice while we look backward to it as an accomplished fact.

The first volume of the Book is, indeed, a neces-

sary key to the second. How shall we understand the words: "Behold the Lamb of God," unless we are familiar with the tragic incident of the Passover and the prophetic ritual of the altar? How shall we comprehend the saying of Jesus to Nicodemus: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life" unless, like Nicodemus, we are familiar with the story of Ezion-Geber? Thus in order to enter the Holy of Holies we must pass through the outer court.

The Gospel in the New Testament glows with the light of "the most excellent glory" that shone above the Tabernacle of the Old. The mercy seat is sprinkled with the blood of Calvary and the open sepulchre in Joseph's garden echoes with ancient prophecies of life and immortality brought to light. The importance of studying the Old Testament is obvious, therefore, if we would understand the full, broad, glorious significance of the divine plan of salvation from the penalty and power of sin.

As there is only one God so there is only one authoritative Book of God; and the Bible is that one. Its parts all hold together as a coherent and consistent though complex unit: all alike being inspired and profitable for the making of a man.

It is not meant by this, however, that all portions of the Book are equally profitable. The law with respect to the robbing of a bird's nest is obviously not so important as the precept, "Thou shalt not kill." It is not so essential that we should familiarize our-

selves with the catalogue of names in Genesis 10—though in point of fact this furnishes the basis of ethnological science—as that we should know the riches of divine grace. But there is a good and sufficient reason for every portion of it. Not a chapter is negligible or dispensable.

It is true also that much of the Bible is not designed to be read in the public services of the sanctuary or even at the family altar. In a book intended to touch life at every point in its circumference there must needs be many passages fit only for conference betwixt a man and God alone: unveilings of carnal rottenness in the secret imaginations of the heart; flashes of a two-edged sword that cuts to the very dividing of the bones and marrow. These are to be read only in those private chambers where the soul sits bare and naked before God.

But the supremely important point to remember in the study of the Scriptures is that their nexus is the divine plan of salvation. Omit that and the whole fabric is reduced to threads and thrums. It is only with the Cross as our golden key that we so enter the Book as to perceive not only the unity of its various parts but the profitableness of every part for some of the diverse uses of life. All Scripture is thus seen to be contributary to the far-reaching purpose of God in our redemption and building up unto the measure of the fulness of the stature of a man.

IV

ITS COMPLETENESS

THE Bible is a comprehensive summary of all spiritual truth, so far forth as a knowledge of spiritual truth is necessary to our temporal and eternal well-being. It is so characterized by Paul in one of his letters to Timothy, where he says "Abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a babe thou hast known the Sacred Writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; *that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.*" (R. V.)

It thus appears that, in the opinion of Paul at least, all spiritual truth, so far as needed for our guidance, is summarized in the Scriptures. This fact is worthy of emphasis in view of what is being said about "progressive revelation."

Do we affirm, then, that there is no such thing as progress in the understanding of truth? By no means! But we do insist that all progress in spiritual knowledge is within the circumscription of this Book; as John Robinson said, when bidding farewell to the

Pilgrims who were embarking at Delft Haven: "I pray you to remember that new light will be ever breaking forth from the Word of God!" New light, ever; but no new Sun of Righteousness. It is a singular fact that, despite the philosophic research of centuries, no truth within the province of spiritual things has ever been discovered beyond the boundaries of Scripture: by which it would appear that Scripture contains the ultimate and adequate sum total required for the supply of human need. There are no limitations in God but there is a definite limit to our knowledge of him.

As there is no new force in the material universe, though there is no end of new adjustments and applications of force, so while there are no new principles in the spiritual province, there are continually new interpretations and larger uses of them. The sun, which is our source of light and energy, is not changed to meet the demands of a progressive world though there are many "new things under the sun." The Bible, in like manner, though closed and finally sealed long centuries ago, was divinely adjusted to the progress of all succeeding ages.

The uninspired word "Finis" on the last page of the Bible is as true as though it were incorporated in it. The meaning of that word is that the revelation of truth contained therein is so comprehensive that there would never be need of an *addendum*. It stands like a challenge to the progress of the future, saying, "Supplant me or supplement me if you can!"

The last words of the last chapter of the last portion of Scripture are significant; "I testify unto every

man that heareth the words of the prophecies (i.e., teachings) of this Book; If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this Book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and out of the holy city which are written in this Book."

I am not unaware that those who deny the integrity of the Scriptures are accustomed to say that the warning referred to was intended to apply only to that particular portion of Scripture which contains it, namely "the Book of the Revelation of John." But this does not relieve the situation, for two reasons: *first,* because it is not easy to perceive the grounds upon which this limitation is based or how its originators discovered it; and *second,* because, even granting it, they would probably be as reluctant (putting it mildly) to consent to the full inspiration and trustworthiness of John's account of his apocalyptic visions as of any other portion of the Book. The only escape from the dilemma on their part is to deny the singular truth of the Scriptures *in toto:* which, frankly stated, is precisely what they do.

At this point attention is called to a fact which is difficult of explanation on the part of those so-called "Biblical experts" who deny—and not infrequently deride—the plenary and inerrant inspiration of the original autographs of Scripture. The business of textual criticism is to purge all current versions of unwarranted changes and additions by careful and scholarly comparison with the earliest manuscripts, so as to arrive, as nearly as possible, at the original text.

But why so? If this Book is to be classed as "mere literature" and treated accordingly, why not seek for the latest instead of the first edition? The text books in use when we were children at school are all obsolete. Such as are now being studied by our boys and girls must presently be revised and "brought up to date." The last editions are required in every case. Why, then, should the first edition of the Scriptures be in such universal demand? Is not this a practical concession that the original manuscript of Scripture, if found, would prove to be the highest authority in spiritual things for this and every age? In other words, marvellous to tell, the Bible, written so many centuries ago, must have been intended to abide through all generations as an unalterable Book; and this because it is full and complete, measuring out to the entire race its supply for all moral needs from the beginning to the very end of time.

V

ITS SUFFICIENCY

THE Bible would not be a complete book did it not supply all the moral and spiritual needs of all sorts and conditions of men.

Does it meet that requirement?

In the so-called "parable" of Dives and Lazarus we are given to understand that our Lord thought so. It runs on this wise: In a certain town there lived six brothers, all eminently respectable men. They obeyed the laws, paid their honest debts and minded their own affairs. As to spiritual things they were non-committal; why should they trouble themselves about God and the future when they were so comfortable in the enjoyment of the world here and now? The worst that could be said of them was that they were living a self-centred life. But that was bad enough, as we shall see.

One of these brothers had a luxurious home where, clothed in purple and fine linen, he fared sumptuously every day. The fact that a certain beggar, sick and forlorn, was accustomed to sit before his gate may have annoyed him; but he satisfied his conscience by giving the poor fellow the crumbs that fell from his table. He probably felt that he was magnanimous in not ordering him off the premises.

Now it came to pass, in the course of events, that

the beggar died—as all beggars do—and being a worthy man, in spite of his poverty he went to heaven. He was there received into that innermost place of happiness which the rabbis were accustomed to call "Abraham's bosom," a term borrowed from the custom of reclining on couches at banquets. By this we are given to understand that his faithfulness admitted him to the near presence of the father of the faithful, where a feast of spiritual viands was spread before him.

And then it came to pass, in the course of events, that "the rich man also died." What? Yes, they all do. He died "and was buried." No doubt he had an imposing funeral and his virtues were commemorated in a glowing epitaph. What then? He "went to his own place." Where else could he go but to the place for which his character had fitted him? That place is called *Sheol* in the Hebrew, and in our translation by a word not to be mentioned in ears polite; yet Christ used it without mouthing or mumbling. It is the place appointed for all sordid and selfish souls who live for self and die without God.

The two places thus designated were far apart; yet the distance could not be measured in terms of space; for the rich man in hell could see what was transpiring in heaven and was within hailing distance of it. Shall we wonder at this? Did you never know a husband and wife who, living under the same roof, were yet infinitely separated from each other by the fact that they were hopelessly at odds concerning vital things? So here, the rich man is represented

as holding a conversation with Abraham, though he could not approach him.

Let it be observed that in this colloquy he makes no complaint with respect to his own condition in the final adjustment of things. He was doubtless aware of the saying, "As a man soweth, so also shall he reap," and apparently he recognized the fact that justice was being meted out to him.

But he had a request to make, namely, that Lazarus might be sent, with a finger dipped in that River of Life which flows through the midst of heaven, to cool his tongue which was burning with thirst, the consuming thirst of vain regret for opportunities unheeded and gone by.

To grant that request was impossible in the nature of the case. The water which he craved was not among the "good things" which he had chosen and enjoyed in his lifetime. What he now really wanted was not a draught of the water of life but of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness. Alas, he could not forget. "Son, remember!" The Persians have a proverb, "The remembrances of past happiness are the wrinkles of the soul." What shall be said, then, of the remembrances of past privilege and lost opportunity?

"And besides this," said Abraham, "between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that there can be no passing to and fro." Who fixed that gulf? Not God; for it is written that the twelve gates of his heaven are wide open forever. Why, then, does not this rich man pass in? For the same reason that so many homeless, friendless, cheerless folk pass by our church doors without a thought of entering.

However disconsolate their condition in the outer darkness, they are more comfortable there than they would be in a praying, psalm-singing company like ours. So with the rich man in the parable: nothing but his own choosing excludes him from the fellowship of saints. He hears them singing over yonder, "Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty"; but to dwell amid the praises of a holy God would be torture to him. He hears them praising the Saviour in such glowing terms as these: "Worthy art thou to receive honour and glory and power and dominion for thou hast washed our robes and made them white"; but what cares he for Christ or for the righteousness of saints? He sees them going on their Lord's errands as ministering spirits; but he has never learned the generous pleasure of kindly deeds. Oh, no; heaven would have been a more insufferable place than hell for one whose life of self-pleasing had so utterly disqualified him for it. He was thirsty, but not for water like that. He was unhappy, but not with any longing for the felicity of saints. What he wanted was not a change of character but merely a surcease of pain. His choice had been made in his earthly life and was still made. He would not choose otherwise. The gulf was fixed and he himself had fixed it. His character had been crystallized by death; which is the end of probation; for so it is written, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still and he that is holy let him be holy still." *And what could change it?*

He had, however, another request to make: "I pray thee, father, that thou wouldst send Lazarus to my father's house; for I have five brethren! that he

may testify unto them lest they also come into this place of torment." By this we are given to understand that his brothers were still living in the selfish enjoyment of wealth and sensual comfort and without troublesome thoughts of death or of that which follows it. There is an intimation in this request that, in the opinion of Dives, they were not having a fair chance. It is as if he said "My brothers do not know! If they were sufficiently informed as to the reality of eternal things they would surely change their manner of life."

But would they? Now mark the answer; for here is where the sufficiency of Scripture comes in. The answer was, *"They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them."*

The term "Moses and the Prophets" was one of the current phrases used to designate the Scriptures. The intimation is that these brothers had in the Bible all the light that was necessary for their guidance and admonition, however they might persist in running on the bosses of the shield of God.

At this point the rich man remonstrates: "Nay, father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead they would repent." This sounds reasonable; but in point of fact there was nothing in it. The time came when one did actually rise from the dead—when Christ himself, who had been crucified before their eyes, came forth from his sepulchre, as was certified by "above five hundred who saw him at once,"—and still we are left to believe that they were unconvinced and went living right on in the same way.

So comes the final word: *"If they hear not Moses*

and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Here is the climacteric of the Parable. It has pleased God to reveal himself in the Scriptures as a God of infinite justice and infinite love. He has made himself known in this manner so that sinners might repent and seek salvation. In this Book the plan of salvation is made perfectly clear. All that need be known is here made known; so that any man, with the Bible in his hand, though his sins are as scarlet, may set himself right with God.

Let it be observed in this connection that Abraham himself had no Bible. The divine will was communicated to him in dreams and visions and angel visits. He was born a pagan, the son of an idol-maker, and was taught to bow before gods of wood and stone. But the time came when he heard a Voice, calling him to "leave his father's house and go forth into a country that he knew not"; and he followed that Voice. He lived up to the full measure of his light; and in the light thus given he read the Gospel: as Jesus said "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad." He was thus saved—a pagan born, two thousand years before the Advent—by faith precisely like ours in the Christ who said, "I am the Way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Observe, again, that the five brothers referred to had the Bible. True, it was only the Old Testament; but that was enough for what was required of them. It contained the Law, and "he that keepeth the law shall live by it." But suppose they broke the law?

Then they had the Gospel in the prophecies; for the Prophets all conspired to speak of Christ, who in the fulness of time was to be "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed." The Gospel is recorded in the Old Testament as really as in the New. The tragedy of Calvary runs through it like a scarlet thread. The birth, life, character, vicarious death and resurrection of Jesus are there so plain that he who runs may read. Wherefore the five brothers were without excuse if they did not believe in him.

But how about us? We have the voice of nature, as the heathen have it, "the invisible things of God being clearly seen and understood by the things that are made"; so that we are "without excuse." We have the Voice that speaks from heaven, as Abraham heard it; and if we refuse to hear the Voice of the Spirit or fail to live up to this measure of our light we are again "without excuse." We have the Old Testament with its Messianic prophecies and the New Testament with its Evangelists pointing to Christ and showing how all those prophecies were fulfilled in him; wherefore, again and most obviously, we are "without excuse." We have, in addition to all this, the record of nineteen centuries of Christian progress, in which the majestic figure of Christ is seen in the forefront of all the great enterprises of civilization transforming the home, the workshop, society and government, and ever enlarging and extending the borders of Christendom with a sure promise of ultimately bringing in the Golden Age. What more could we ask? Or how shall we escape if we neglect so

great salvation? Will not the five brothers of Dives rise up against us in judgment should we sin against our noonday sun? Alas, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light!"

Is it to be imagined that if one rose from the dead to admonish us the result would be different? If Christ himself were to appear at this moment, with the glory of the resurrection shining in his face and a troop of archangels following him, would that convince the unconvinced? The chances are they would regard it as a hallucination. The light might dazzle, bewilder, affrighten; but surely it would not remove the unbelief of any who refuse to accept the testimony of the authoritative Word of God.

VI

ITS LITERARY VALUE

THERE are those who say that the Bible is mere "literature" and must therefore be subject to the common canons of criticism. For the sake of the argument let us concede this. Waiving the fact that, unlike all other literature, it is divinely inspired, let us proceed to scrutinize its character as a mere book among books.

And here, as in our last chapter, we shall be helped by a consideration of one of our Lord's parables, to wit, the brief Parable of the Householder and his Treasury. It is recorded in Matthew 13:52; *"Therefore every scribe who is instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven is like unto an householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."*

A traveller is here represented as coming to an Oriental home at eventide for entertainment. His host, desirous of showing his importance, brings out his treasures and spreads them before him. There were no banks or other places of safe deposit in those days. One's wealth must be buried in the ground or kept in a recess in the wall. The householder goes to his treasury accordingly and brings out things new and old; antique coins; necklaces worn by princes of long ago; golden shields bearing the dint of old-time

battles; precious stones plucked from the crowns of captive kings; the loot of the campaigns of ages. All these are spread before the eyes of his wondering guest.

Now, says Jesus, the scribe is a custodian of the Oracles of God. The key is at his girdle. His business is to bring forth the wealth of Scripture, new truths and old, to dazzle and enchant the beholder's eyes.

There is a select coterie of scribes in our time who arrogate to themselves the title of "Biblical Experts": and they will brook no trespassing on their prerogative. Over the gateway of the Scriptures they have placed the caveat,

"N. B. No thoroughfare.

This preserve is for the use of duly accredited Scholars. Ministers and laymen alike are warned off. By order of

The Erudite Junto."

But ministers and laymen are not to be frightened so easily. They insist upon the right of personal judgment in these premises. The words of Jesus "Search the Scriptures" were not addressed to any pedagogic clique but to the people all and several. The search-warrant is in the hands of every man.

A Biblical critic is, to a minister of the Gospel, as an apothecary's apprentice to a physician. The 'prentice makes the pills and lotions, knows their constituent parts, and possibly feels himself a master of the Materia Medica; but it will probably be conceded that the physician, whose business is not merely to know what pills and lotions are made of but how to

apply them to the necessities of physical life, is somewhat the wiser of the two. Certainly the young knight of the pestle has his place, but in the practical uses of the pharmacopœia the practising physician is master of the situation.

So a minister of the Gospel, despite the admonition of the Erudite Junto, must insist upon his prerogative in the exposition of the word. It is his place to know not merely those Scriptural infinitesimals, the jots and tittles, which men discover with microscopes, but to know what the Scriptures are good for. It is claimed, therefore, in behalf of ministers of the Gospel, that they are quite competent to speak advisedly regarding the composition of the Scriptures and their uses.

But when it comes to the literary value of the Scriptures neither learned professors nor ministers in holy orders can enter any claim superior to that of the average man. These succulent pastures are open alike to all lovers of rhetorical style and beauty.

When Paul, a man of liberal culture, graduate of the University of Jerusalem, was a prisoner at Rome, he wrote to a young friend at Ephesus, "Give diligence to come shortly unto me. The cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus bring with thee when thou comest, and the books but especially the parchments." The cloak was for winter days in the Mammertine jail. The books, probably Greek and Oriental treatises, were such as would cheer a scholar's lonely hours. But the parchments, the scrolls of Scripture, were desired above all. "Especially the parchments!" He could, if need be, endure the cold of

winter without his cloak; he could get along without the classic poets and philosophers; but the Bible, ah, he must have that; for the treasures of life were in it!

When John Bunyan was a prisoner in Bedford jail he found solace for his loneliness in the companionship of books. His library, however, was in point of numbers a very meagre one. His books were only three; but, as Mr. Froude significantly says, "One of these was the Bible, which is of itself a liberal education."

In view of the glowing tributes paid by scholars of the centuries to the literary value of the Bible, it behooves the dilettanti of letters to speak with reserve in disparagement of it.

"A glory gilds the sacred page
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives but borrows none.
The Hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat:
Its truths upon the nations rise,
They rise but never set."

Let us now for the purpose in hand, erase the name of Jehovah from the title page of the Bible and view it simply as literature; as one of the volumes in the world's library. What other volume is to be compared with it?

I. To begin with, as to its Poetry.

One-third of the Old Testament is in poetic form. The earliest of its poems, and probably the oldest scrap of poetry in existence, is the Song of the Sword in Genesis 4:23. It seems to have been commemora-

tive of some primitive feud. A man named Lamech, going out to avenge himself returns with a song:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken to my speech!
I have slain a man for wounding me,
A young man for smiting me.
If Cain was seven times avenged,
Then Lamech seventy times seven!"

It is scarcely necessary to observe that there is no intimation of a divine approval of this sanguinary outburst. The record stands without comment, as in many similar cases. It is greatly to be deplored that the martial spirit of the Sword Song has been perpetuated along the succeeding ages.

A most stirring pæan of righteous victory is that of Deborah. The Marseillaise, God Save the King and the Battle Hymn of the Republic are flat, stale and unprofitable beside it. She summons the princes of Israel to the fray. We hear the footfall of the multitude rushing to the high places of the field. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera. The river Kishon, that mighty river, sweeps past in tumult, bearing the terror-stricken enemy in utter rout towards the sea. And above the hoarse artillery of heaven, the roar of torrents and the affrighted cries of the vanquished we hear the song of the prophetess inspiring the victors and invoking retribution upon the cowards of Israel who had lingered among the bleating flocks:

"Curse ye Meroz,
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;

Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty!
Through the window looks
The mother of Sisera.
'Why lingers his chariot in coming?
Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?'
Thus let them perish,
All thine enemies, O Most High!
O my soul,
Thou hast trodden down strength!"

Of this memorable battle song it may be said as Carlyle wrote of "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," that it "should be sung with the voice of the whirlwind."

And where is there anything like Habakkuk's vision from the watch tower? He sees the Almighty marching through history:

"God came from Teman,
And the Holy One from Mount Paran;
His glory covered the heavens
And the earth was full of his praise!"

Before him goes the pestilence and burning coals are under his feet; on either side the hills are bowing and the mountains are scattering. The ocean utters his voice and lifts his crested hands on high. Sun and moon stand still in their habitations at the flash of his speeding arrows and the shining of his spear. With flail in hand he strides through the centuries threshing the nations in righteous indignation.

The most familiar Hymn of the Springtime is that of Solomon. All the poets have sung of vernal beauties and the renewal of life but never one so sweetly as here:

"My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!
For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone:
The flowers appear on the earth,
The time of the singing of birds is come
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
The fig-tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom;
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!"

The New Testament opens with the song of the herald angels, "To you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men!" Shall we search for anything to equal it? Nowhere shall we find it save in the culminating song of adoration, "Thou art worthy to receive honour and power and riches and wisdom and strength and glory and blessing for ever and ever: Amen!"

These are but a few examples of the inspired poetry which moved John Milton to say "There are no songs like the songs of Zion." There are other singers like Virgil and Homer and burning Sappho, Goethe and Schiller and Shakespeare, but how they dwindle beside the bards of Scripture! They are as twittering swallows in a field of warbling larks. Never have poets sung like those who dipped their pens in "Siloa's brook that flows fast by the oracle of God."

II. Let us visit the treasury again and bring forth some of its masterpieces of Eloquence.

We begin with Judah's plea for his brethren at the

Egyptian court, probably the oldest example of oratory in existence. He was a shepherd at court, a stranger in a strange land, arraigned with his brethren on a criminal charge. The possibility of death confronted them. Over them brooded the memory of a dreadful secret sin. It was under such conditions that Judah presented his argument in their behalf, earnest and pathetic almost unto death. "His fancy," says Dr. Guthrie, "plays with rare delicacy around the venerable form of that patriarch who in the distant home is waiting for Benjamin, and whose very life is bound up in the life of the child." For Benjamin and that aged father he supplicates with tearful fervency: "And it shall come to pass that when we come to thy servant, my father, and he seeth that the lad is not with us, he shall die! We shall bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave!"

The brief of Aaron's plea for the emancipation of Israel is in evidence. Day after day, sixteen times successively, he comes before the tyrant Pharaoh, wielding the rod of Jehovah and in his name demanding that the chains of his people shall be broken. How puny seem the forms of such abolitionists as Wilberforce and Lloyd Garrison in the presence of this mighty liberator! "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go!" Pharaoh refuses. The river of Egypt rolls red as blood, reptiles infest the land creeping up even into its kneading-troughs; the sun is veiled in darkness, the pestilence stalks abroad, the harvests are beaten down by furious storms of hail, until—sorrow's crown of sorrow—the lament for the first-born rises at midnight from every home. Then the people march

forth; three millions of slaves delivered by the irresistible voice of a single servant of God!

The time would fail me to tell of Nathan and his parable of The Little Ewe Lamb, of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, "Repent ye, repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" of Stephen courting death in his eager passion to unveil the frightful sin of the people in crucifying their long-looked-for Messiah; of Peter at Pentecost preaching with such power that three thousand souls are pricked to the heart and fall sobbing at the feet of the Saviour; or of Paul on Mars' Hill, setting forth the doctrine of human rights in words that were destined to be the foregleam of all subsequent manifestoes in behalf of civil and ecclesiastical freedom: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth!"

But the crowning eloquence of the Scriptures is that of the Master himself. No wonder the common people heard him gladly. "He spake as one having authority." They "marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." A Roman guard was sent to arrest him; they paused to listen, were captivated and returned without their prisoner. "Why have ye not brought him?" demanded their masters. Was ever so strange an answer given by men of battle, proof against sentiment, hardened to merciless tasks. "Never man spake like this man!"

These are some of the displays of oratory which moved Daniel Webster to say, "If there is aught of power on my lips it is because of my acquaintance

with the eloquence of the Scriptures which I learned at my mother's knee."

III. We go again to the treasury and bring forth some of its Historical wealth.

Here we have the only authentic record of events running back to the infancy of time. All other chronicles are fragmentary. Cæsar and Zenophon wrote episodes; but here are universal annals. This is a deep river, flowing backward in its course past the ruined cities of antiquity, in tortuous windings whose roar and thunder are as the confused noise of battle; through the quiet pastures of peace, through the solitudes of primeval ages, past the confusion of tongues, the deluge, the creation of man, past that remote period when the earth was without form and void, onward still beyond the floating nebulæ, and still beyond to the ineffable glory where its source is found beneath the heavenly throne; as it is written, "In the beginning, God!"

This Book of Events has triumphantly passed the ordeal of centuries of adverse criticism. In these last days the archæologists, digging among the ruins of ancient cities, have unearthed many confirmations of Holy Writ. Voices have come from mummy crypts and buried forums and sculptured obelisks saying, with one consent Yea and Amen to it.

IV. A passing glance at the Scientific propositions of the Book.

It is needless to remind the reader how persistently these have been assailed. It is a common thing to hear it said, "The Bible was not intended to be a scientific book," giving the impression that it makes little dif-

ference, therefore, whether its scientific affirmations are correct or not. This, however, is not a matter of small moment. If the book is not veracious in this particular, what ground have we for committing ourselves to its spiritual guidance? A minister who proves himself unreliable in secular matters, whose word cannot be trusted anywhere except in the pulpit, would not for a moment pass unchallenged as a spiritual counsellor. The question is not whether the Bible was intended to be a scientific book or not, but *whether the Bible is true.* It is not true unless it is true and reliable every way.

The Old Testament Scriptures abound everywhere in scientific statements. They treat of biology, ethnology, astronomy, geology, zoölogy, indeed of every department of natural science. You would have to tear the Book to tatters in order to eliminate such allusions. But neither in general nor in particular have they been successfully impugned. The substantial discoveries of science (observe, I do not say dreams and hypotheses) are continually indorsing and verifying them. It is not to be denied that multitudes of undevout scientists are clamorous against them. But the Bible which has withstood the hostile criticism of centuries, is not likely to be affected in this way.

V. Now as to the Ethics of the Scriptures.

By common consent the Bible is accepted as the standard of universal morals. We take our position between Sinai and Olivet, the two mountains of the Law and the Gospel, and find here the source of the world's jurisprudence and the sanctions of all civil and social peace and order.

And along with these ethical precepts of Scripture we find here a portrait gallery of worthies in whom they have been practically illustrated, such as Enoch, Abraham, David, Elijah, Ruth the virtuous, the three Marys, Paul and the Sons of Thunder. What a roll call of mighty and virtuous ones is found in these inspired pages! Yet all alike are avowedly "concluded under sin," and all join in the confession that they "come short of the glory of God."

There is One among them, however, whose face shines as the sun shineth in his strength. Over his head we write, "The Wonderful," and under his feet, "Verily this was a righteous man." How it helps us struggling men and women to have an ideal so glorious before us! In him we behold the perfect consummation of duty, holiness, manhood, character. He is the only one who ever lived on earth of whom it could be said, He was as good as the law. Of him the Nonesuch Professor aptly says, "He brought the bottom of his life up to the top of his light." In him all graces were combined, precisely as all colours blend in the white solar ray—the golden glory of the sunrise, the deep blue of the heavens, the emerald of the sea. Thus Christ, illustrating in himself all virtues and excellencies, stands forth in history as the Ideal Man.

VI. Once more, let us bring forth from the storehouse its wealth of Doctrine. For the Scriptures are of pre-eminent value in their clear solution of the problems of the spiritual life.

There are some things which all earnest souls are eager to know. We can get along without science, we can live without the lower forms of knowledge, but

we must somehow be advised respecting the problems of our origin and destiny. Whence came we and whither do we go? Is there a God? Shall we stand before him in judgment? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? Can a man be delivered from the shame and penalty and power of sin? These are questions that will not down. They demand an answer.

All such uncertainties are involved in that old question, "What is truth?" The Academy by the Ilissus, the painted porch of Zeno, the Garden of Epicurus, represent vain efforts to answer it. Canst thou by searching find out God? The despair of the world was expressed by Pilate when he satirically asked, "What is truth?" But it has pleased God to make known in the Scriptures the things which are beyond our unaided reason.

Other books have poems, but no other sings the song of salvation and gives the troubled soul a peace that floweth like a river. Other books have eloquence, but no other enables us to behold God stretching out pierced hands and pleading with men to turn and live. Other books have history, but no other tells the story of divine love reaching from the remote councils of eternity to its consummation on Calvary, "the old, old story of Jesus and his love." Other books have science, but no other can give a man such definite assurance with respect to the future that he can say, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Other books set forth philosophy, but no other makes us wise with respect to all those great doctrines which centre in the living God.

Let us remember then, the word of the Master how he said, "Search the Scriptures." The word is *ereunate,* meaning to search like a hound on the trail. Search them as for hid treasure! Blessed, thrice blessed is the man who, by such searching, finds the secret of eternal life.

> This is the field where hidden lies
> The pearl of price unknown;
> The merchant is divinely wise
> Who makes that pearl his own.

In our childhood we were led by fairy guides into subterranean caves, where vaulted roofs and fretted walls sparkled with precious stones. Thus, to the reader whose eyes are opened by the touch of the Spirit, do the Scriptures glow with the unspeakable riches of truth. But amid their countless splendours there is none so wonderful as Christ himself. He is the Kohinoor, the crown jewel of them all.

These being the literary marvels of the Book is it in anywise surprising that it should be "the best seller" in the book markets of the world to-day?

VII

ITS UP-TO-DATE-NESS

THE Bible is the oldest book in the world. A considerable part of it was old enough to be out of date—had it not been immune against the ravages of time—when Cecrops founded Egypt. We speak of Chaucer as the father of Anglo-Saxon literature; but the book of Job was current three thousand years before Dan Chaucer opened up the "well of English undefyled." Dr. Johnson read the sweet pastoral of Ruth aloud in a literary club, at a time when infidelity was rife: and great was the amazement of his hearers when, in answer to their exclamation, "Where did you find it?" he answered, "This was written twenty-five hundred years before Columbus was born!"

Yet, strange to say, this oldest of books is the freshest of all. No other will bear reading over and over again with "new light ever bursting from it." Dr. Elliot sitting by the window with a Bible on his knees, on being asked by his daughter what he was reading, replied, "The news, my dear, always the good news!"

The poet Goethe said, "The Bible becomes more and more beautiful, the more I study it." There are millions of people who are searching the Scriptures year in and year out and finding them as fresh as the

break of day. This is because the Book was so constructed, by divine wisdom, as to anticipate progress. Its truths, its ethical precepts, its exceeding great and precious promises, are like Oriental spices which, the more they are rubbed, give forth the more of fragrant sweetness. The Gospel is indeed the last tidings from the heaven of a loving God.

There are men posing as "liberal" and "progressive" who speak patronizingly of the Bible as a "back number," good enough perhaps for its time but far behind the days we are living in. The trouble with them, however, is that they themselves have failed to keep abreast of progress. They are like the Danites who, defaulting in loyalty to the Ark of the Covenant and its Book of the Law, were condemned to "go hindmost with their standards." (Numbers 2:31.)

There have always been Danites in the church, self-sufficient, arrogant, heedless of authority and disloyal to "Book of the Law." In our time they call themselves "liberal," because of their liberalism toward all but loyalists; and "progressive," despite their rejection of the Scriptures which ever lead the van. In point of fact they are themselves behind the times; and despite their clamorous insistence on leadership they do go "hindmost with their standards" in the procession of events.

They say they "love the Bible"; but their devotion to it is like that of Abner for Asahel, who while greeting him affectionately was fumbling for his dagger that he might "smite him under the fifth rib." They profess loyalty to the Church; but like a serpent by the way they "bite the heels" of the Lord's cavalry

as it pursues its evangelistic march toward the Golden Age. They profess a profound reverence for Christ: yet they insist that those who follow his teaching and example in the defence of the Scriptures are far and away behind the age. Are they right? If so, Christ and his apostles, and the ministry generally, and the great body of believers in the Universal Church throughout the world are desperately wrong in following the Ark of the Covenant with its Book of the Law.

(1) All loyalists maintain, to begin with, that the Bible *as a book of science* is abreast of the age.

Let us open it and straightway we come upon these words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here are three scientific propositions in a row, all dealing with the origin of things.

To begin with, *God:* not law, nor energy, nor a headless, heartless, heedless "soul of the universe"; but One to whom we can lift our eyes and say, "Our Father"; a Father with eyes to see, and a heart to pity and an arm to make bare in our behalf, "when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall."

Then "God *created*." This scientific proposition is set over against three counter propositions; namely, the Eternity of Matter, Autogenesis and Evolution. The first of these is a grotesque attempt to cut the Gordian knot. The second is a dogma without a scintilla of evidence, since nobody is able to exhibit so much as one self-producing midget or grain of sand. And the third is a pure hypothesis, which many of the

leading scientists have avowedly abandoned on the ground that it "does not afford a working theory of origins."

Still further, God created the heavens and earth and all things therein in *a definite order*. And the order of creation as here laid down is confirmed by leading cosmologists. It is a singular fact that a book written so many thousands of years ago should have anticipated the researches of the later centuries. How shall we account for it? There was a time when those who called themselves "advanced thinkers" insisted that there was a mistake in the Genesis statement as to the existence of light before the sun; but nobody says so now; because everybody knows that frictional or electric light must have existed in the confusion of chaos before the appearance of the sun. Thus the scientific propositions of the Scriptures—called in question one by one—have survived criticism and emerged as proven facts.

So if any of us are posing as "progressives," it would be well to take heed lest we may be found hindmost in the ranks. Let us put our ears to the ground and listen to things that are going on.

(2) Now with reference to the Bible *as a book of history*. It is worth noting that those who call themselves "liberals" and "progressives" and "higher critics" and "advanced thinkers" ("There is a generation, O how high are their eyes and their eyelids lifted up!") while insisting that the Scriptures were really "intended to show historically the evolution of a Nation," yet, in the same breath, affirm that their historicity is not to be depended on! But all attempts

to cast reproach on their historical veracity are utterly vain.

The Pentateuch, made up of the Five Books of Moses, has naturally been the centre of attack. It has been stigmatized as a collection of myths and fables and folk-lore, little better that the preposterous Tales of Baron Munchausen. There are theological professors who frankly hold that view.

It was not long ago that certain "progressives" were wont to affirm boldly that there never was any such person as Moses, because no mention of him could be found in other records; and, anyway, allowing that there was such a man, he couldn't possibly have written the Pentateuch, because the art of writing was unknown in his time. Then along came a man with a spade and, digging among the ruins of Tel-el-Amarna, he unearthed a whole library of correspondence carried on by the Kings of Babylon before Moses was dreamed of!

They said that Exodus was a myth; for how could there have been such an émeute of millions of slaves without some mention of it in contemporary annals? Then along came the man with the spade and began digging in the valley of the Nile; and presently he came upon a burial crypt from which was taken a mummy of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, wrapped in byssus bands on which was inscribed the going forth of the fugitives!

But, in any case, it was insisted that there were no Hittites, no such formidable nation as the Israelites are said to have encountered in the subjugation of Canaan; for surely so important a nation would have

been mentioned somewhere else. The man with the spade appeared again; and in the valley of the Euphrates he unearthed seals and cylinders and ruined cities which certified not only to the fact that the Hittites existed but that they conquered Egypt and flourished—at the very time indicated in the Pentateuch—as the greatest of the Great Powers of those days!

Let the Danites take heed and beware of this man with the spade! For it has pleased the God of the Scriptures to leave a Trial Ledger in the deep places of the earth, by which the arrogant claims of those who deny the historicity of the inspired records may at any moment be put to an open shame.

(3) Now let us revert again to the Bible as *a masterpiece of literature.*

It is, as I have repeatedly said, the oldest book in the world. How shall we account for its existence to-day? Old books die. Where are "Novum Organum," "Hydriotaphia" and "Eikonoklastes"? You do not even recognize their names? Yet these were the three epoch-making books of their time! "Novum Organum," by Lord Bacon, introduced with new emphasis the inductive system of philosophy. "Hydriotaphia," by Sir Thomas Browne, was regarded as the most comprehensive thesaurus of knowledge produced thus far. And "Eikonoklastes," by John Milton, was the monumental defence of popular rights as against the divine right of kings. Where are they now? Yet the old Bible still lives and is "the best seller" in the book markets of the world.

But if the Bible has such surpassing merit, from the literary point of view, why should there be such

a prejudice against it? Can it be that our "progressive" friends have been so busily engaged in studying its outside that they are actually ignorant of its contents? Such things have been known.

There never was a more "progressive" body of men than the free thinking members of the Encyclopedia in France a hundred years ago; yet when Benjamin Franklin read to them a chapter of Scripture beginning, "God came from Teman and the Holy One from Paran," they exclaimed with one accord, "Wonderful! Wonderful! But who wrote it?" On his replying, "This is the prayer of Habakkuk," they cried, "Habakkook! Who is Habakkook? We never heard of him."

It is a matter of common fame that young men are going out of certain of our theological seminaries armed with all sorts of information against the authenticity of the Bible, who, on examination, prove to be hopelessly ignorant of what is recorded in it.

(4) Finally, consider the Bible *as a religious book*. And just here is the real secret of the opposition to it. "The carnal mind is enmity against God"; and the moment you open the Bible you come upon some tremendous truths that centre in him.

The first of these is God himself; whom the Athenian mind so far explains away that no altar is left but one inscribed "To the unknown God."

The second is man; made in God's likeness but lost in sin, his birthright gone and *Ichabod* written on his forehead: "The glory hath departed." This is attributed to an incident known as "The fall." But the fall is denied. One of our leading "liberals" said

forty years ago that "if man ever fell, he fell up." He would scarcely say so to-day, however, because the last forty years have witnessed the formulation and general acceptance of a scientific doctrine known as "heredity" which is almost literally a paraphrase of original sin.

The third of the religious truths of Scripture is the Reconciliation of sinful man with a holy God. Here emerges the Cross. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." As the vicarious atonement is practically denied by all so-called "progressives," it surely devolves upon them to show how the wayward child and the offended Father can be brought into an at-one-ment in some other way. But the Bible way is the only way. "The Jesus road," as the Apaches call it, is the only road back to God. There is no suggestion in the Koran or any other of the sacred books, in science or philosophy or anywhere else, of any other plan for blotting out the mislived past. It is only the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanseth from sin.

These are the doctrines that are most strenuously objected to; yet these very doctrines are abreast of foremost thought. The arguments adduced against them are so old that I marvel at the foolhardiness of the man who reproduces them. Celsus *redivivus,* and Porphyry, Julian the Apostate, Spinoza, Diderot, Jean Jaques Rousseau, Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Strauss, Ernst Renan and Theodore Parker—behold them parading in many of our pulpits and professor's chairs! Up-to-date, forsooth? Not among such Danites, bring-

ing up the rear of the procession, will you hear the bugle call of progress in these days.

In one of the battles of our Civil War a regiment was commanded to charge upon a Confederate battery, which they proceeded to do. But, meeting with unexpected opposition, they were ordered to retreat. The colour-bearer, however, not hearing the order, marched straight on. "Bring back that flag!" called the colonel. "Bring up your men!" replied the colour-bearer. The Ark of the Covenant hears no order to retreat. The Book of the Law "floateth like a banner" in the vanguard of Israel. It tarries not for Danites who abide at home. "The royal standards onward go!"

The Bible has come to stay. The old challenge of Isaiah holds good, "The voice said 'Cry!' And I said 'What shall I cry?'—'All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.'"

Thus it is written and thus it must be; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

VIII

ITS TONE OF AUTHORITY

THERE are three lines of evidence in favour of Christianity; namely, oral testimony, Scripture and personal experience. These when combined are conclusive and irrefutable. "A three fold cord is not easily broken."

First: As to Oral Testimony.

Peter says, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!' And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the holy mount."

The Apostle was here speaking to those who had not seen Jesus in the flesh. He himself had heard his sermons, seen his miracles, witnessed his wonderful life. In particular, he had been with him in the Mount of Transfiguration, had seen his homespun garments flutter aside for a moment revealing the royal purple, and had heard the Voice saying, "This is my beloved Son!" All this was no dream, no fable, no hallucination; he had seen and heard it. And there were others who, as eyewitnesses, were prepared to

testify in like manner as to the divine character and mission of Christ. This sort of testimony is still offered to sustain the Gospel claim.

But you say, "This is mere hearsay." We answer:

(1) Such hearsay has valid weight as evidence. In fact we are all the while accepting evidence of this sort without a murmur. How do we know that light travels at the rate of 186,000 miles a second? Only because certain persons, after investigation, have said so. How do we know that melancholy remnants of the British and German fleets are lying at the bottom of the North Sea? Men who were present have told us so. How do we know that Croton water is fit to drink? We rest on the assurance of scientists who have analyzed it. I suppose that ninety-nine per cent. of our knowledge comes by hearsay. We receive the testimony of eye-witnesses, as a matter of course, unless there is some definite reason for rejecting it.

(2) Such evidence, in favour of Christianity, has a cumulative value for us. In Peter's time there were only a few witnesses who could say, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the word of life, declare we unto you." We, on the contrary, have the testimony of a great multitude which no man can number. For the little procession of eleven men who originally came down the outer stairway from an upper room in Jerusalem has increased along the centuries from hundreds to thousands, from thousands to hundreds of millions. They have passed by the light of fagot-fires and under the shadow of dungeons and gallows-trees, declaring the

testimony of Jesus and singing his praise in hosannas that blend like a chorus of many waters and mighty thunderings issuing from the heavenly gates. Hundreds of millions of Christians living to-day are prepared to testify as to their personal experience in the truth of the Scriptures. They certify with one accord, "We were sinners, troubled with a certain fearful looking-for of judgment. We came to the written Word for knowledge as to the Incarnate Word; and finding Christ we have found salvation through faith in him. Thus the peace that passeth all understanding has come into our hearts. We have not followed cunningly devised fables. We speak from experience. We know whom we have believed and are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him until that day."

It is submitted that so great a body of testimony is of overwhelming weight. To a reasonable man it must be quite conclusive, unless some definite rebuttal is forthcoming. Certainly no court of justice would reject it.

The Second line of evidence is Scripture itself.

Of this Peter goes on to say, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy (i.e. more sure than hearsay), whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The fact that Scripture is "more sure" than oral

testimony is thus clearly based upon its ultimate authority as the inspired and veritable Word of God.

It is obvious that there must be somewhere a final criterion of truth. There are standards of weight and measure at Washington for the testing of every pound and yardstick in our country. It cannot be supposed that the Heavenly Father would set his children adrift without a trustworthy chart for their direction. This is the rationale of the Scriptures. They were intended to be an ultimate and infallible rule of faith and conduct. And they are so received, despite all controversy, by the Universal Church. The man who rejects them is bound, in justice to himself, to discover some other court of final authority, where he may seek, amid the noise of conflicting voices, a confirmation of spiritual things.

The apostle justifies his confidence in the Scriptures by adding that they "came not by the will of man; but through holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." If this means anything, it means that the men who wrote the Scriptures did not sit down of themselves, with stylus and parchment, saying, "I will write an account of the Creation," or, "I will write the history of Israel," or, "I will write a prediction of the Messiah," or, "I will write doctrine and ethics;" but they proceeded to their work and performed it under the immediate direction and control of the Spirit of God. The figure is that of a vessel under sail. They were "moved" by the divine Breath as a ship is borne onward by the wind filling its canvas. In other words they wrote what they were directed to write by the Spirit of God.

Still further, the apostle says that the Scriptures so written are not "of any private interpretation." The word here rendered "private" is *idia,* literally "one's own." This means that no man is his own interpreter. When we speak of "the right of private judgment" with reference to Scriptures, we mean to exclude all human interposition between the soul and God; but alas for one who approaches Revelation in the dim light of his own unaided reason. The finite cannot grasp the infinite. "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." God, who gave the Scriptures, must help us to understand them. Wherefore the Holy Ghost, by whom the sacred page is illuminated, is represented as "anointing our eyes with eyesalve" that we may wisely read it.

The chancellor of Queen Candace, riding in his chariot, with the sacred scroll of the prophet Isaiah before him, knit his brows in perplexity as he read the Messianic prediction, "He is led as a sheep to the slaughter; and, like a lamb dumb before his shearers, so he openeth not his mouth." Philip, the evangelist, walking alongside and hearing him, asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" He answered, "How can I, except some man shall guide me?" He was then guided by the Spirit; and straightway the truth flashed upon him.

The Third line of evidence is also named by Peter; to wit, Personal Experience.

We are like wanderers in the night; voices are heard about us, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it;" better still, the Bible is given us as a lantern "shining in a dark place;" but, when yonder we see

the light of the morning, our perplexity is over. Thus personal experience adds final confirmation to oral testimony and Scripture. Peter says we do well to listen to the word of eye-witnesses and to give heed to the lamp-light of prophecy· "until the day dawn and the day star arise *in our hearts.*"

A woman once came running into the city of Samaria, saying, "I went out to Jacob's well to draw water; and a wayfarer met me who spake as never man spake of spiritual things; he told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Messiah for whom we have been looking? Come and see!" Her friends and neighbours followed her back to the well and heard him. They besought him to be their guest and he abode with them two days; and many believed because of his word. Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." Thus in the last reduction a man is savingly convinced only by personal experience; when he can say, "I have met Christ, have made his acquaintance, have reasoned with him by the way, and have learned to reverence and love him."

It is evident, however, that the final reference with respect to spiritual truth is to the Bible itself. Hearsay is not infallible; personal experience is confined to the purview of a single soul; but the Scriptures are the Court of Final Appeal because they speak with the authority of a supreme and omniscient God.

It might be supposed that a book like this, dealing with spiritual truths all of which lie beyond the

bailiwick of the physical senses, would speak with some measure of reserve or uncertainty; but there are no ifs or perhapses or peradventures here. How could a divine book speak that way? We want no guesses about life and immortality. We must know. We want authority; and there can be no final authority with respect to such problems except that of a divine *ipse dixit*. Wherefore the Book says always, "Yea and Amen," and "Thus saith the Lord," and, "Verily, verily, I say unto you."

Put an "if" into the Decalogue and you lay a charge of dynamite under the morality of men and nations. Put an "if" under the manger at Bethlehem, and you destroy the happiness of a million homes. Put an "if" under Calvary, and you make us Christians of all men most miserable. Put an "if" under the empty sepulchre in Joseph's garden, and straightway our visions of life and immortality vanish into thin air. But blessed be God, there are no ifs in the Bible. It gives no uncertain sound. It speaks as becomes the Oracles of God.

IX

ITS TRUSTWORTHINESS

NO claim of inerrancy is made for the King James version of the Scriptures, nor for any other of the multitudinous versions current in the world to-day.

It is claimed, however, *first,* that the original manuscripts, as they left the hands of "holy men who wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God," must have been free from error in the necessity of the case; and *second,* that the errors in existing copies are of such a character as to convince an unprejudiced mind that the originals were without a flaw.

Whether or no the assurance of such inerrancy in the original autographs is worth while is another question. There are those who say, "What matters it to us whether the writings on sheepskin scrolls which perished long centuries ago were flawless or not? We never saw them and have practically nothing to do with them."

To whom we answer; *first,* our belief in their integrity has a vital bearing not only on our opinion of the veracity of God but also of the character of those who claimed to be moved by his Spirit in declaring his holy will. It is possible to conceive that a man whose mother died before he set eyes upon her might be wholly indifferent as to the question whether she

was a good woman or not, but most of us would feel differently about it.

Our *second* answer to the man who cavils at the importance of believing in the integrity of the original autographs is that our view with respect to that matter cannot but influence our attitude toward the trustworthiness of current versions. A thirsty traveller will readily drink from a brook by the wayside if he can trace its flow upward to a clear fountain in the high hills. He knows that the slight impurities due to the wearing of its banks have not impaired its wholesomeness. If, on the other hand, he were uncertain as to whether its origin were in a spring or a cesspool he would hesitate until he found out.

Our *third* answer is, that the discrepancies in current versions are of such a character as to furnish presumptive proof of the entire correctness of the originals. It would naturally be supposed that a book of such antiquity and of such complex composition would suffer all sorts of disastrous changes in coming down the ages. Think of the tens of thousands of hands through which it has passed; of the copies made by the ancient Scribes with infinite pains; of the numberless transcriptions by mediæval monks in their lonely cells; of the translations into half a thousand languages and dialects. What possibilities of error! For be it remembered, all these transcribers and translators were fallible men. Think of the temptation on their part to interpolate their personal views in the body of the inspired text, or to eliminate what did not please them. Think what sort of a Bible we would have if these transcribers and translators had been such as

the "higher critics" of our time; such, for example, as those so-called "Biblical experts" who, travailing once like the mountain in the proverb, brought forth that grotesquerie known as "The Polychrome Bible." Think of these possibilities, and then look at the Scriptures as they are in the current versions of to-day.

The marvel is not that there are variations and discrepancies here, but that they are so trivial and insignificant. They are indeed of such a character as to convince any candid mind that they had no place in the original autograph but have crept into the text in the process of transmission along the ages.

Singular to relate, there is none that affects in the slightest degree the integrity of the doctrine and ethics of the Book. If the destructive critics are taken at their word the Bible is full of frightful errors; its prophecies have failed, its history is unhistorical, its science is unscientific and its chronicles are myths. It need scarcely be said that, so far from being a true statement of the case, not a single error has yet been indicated which cannot be most reasonably explained as either purely imaginary or unimportant. But here is a marvellous thing: these enemies of Scripture are themselves insistent with one consent, that the errors in the Bible which they so loudly exploit, do not in any degree impair the integrity of its doctrinal system and ethical code!

These things being so, we are warranted in concluding that the inspired Book has in some manner been singularly safeguarded in its transmission along the centuries. The same gracious God who protected his secretaries—those "holy men who wrote as they were

moved by his Spirit"—from all possibility of error in the original autograph, has apparently by a special Providence so protected the flying scroll in its journey down to us, that transcribers and translators have left an "infallible rule of faith and practice" in the versions now current among men.

If it be urged again that we are not practically concerned with the original autograph, inasmuch as no living man has ever seen it; we observe that a like objection could be offered against Christ himself with equal force on precisely the same grounds. The objection proves either too little or too much. No living man has ever seen the Incarnate Word of God. He lived only thirty-three years in this world of ours and then vanished from sight. The only knowledge that we have of him, apart from the Scriptures, is through his followers; for every Christian is, so to speak, a current version of the Incarnate Word. Christ, like the Bible, has suffered by transcription through the ages.

It is nevertheless of supreme importance that we should believe that Christ, as he once lived on earth, was the perfect Son of God. The very mistakes of believers, in their earnest yet inadequate efforts to copy his life and character, are evidences of his perfection. We are ever striving to get back to the original Christ; precisely as reverent students of the Scriptures seek, by both textual and historical criticism, to reach the "original text," that is, the "first edition" of the written Word of God.

X

ITS INFLUENCE ON PERSONAL LIFE

THE ultimate test of life and character was aptly set forth by our Lord and Saviour in the words, "Ye shall know them by their fruits." And the question which followed was one that appealed to the common-sense of all, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

Certainly not. If a man wants a cluster of grapes he will go to a vineyard for it and not to a thicket of thorns. Or if he is searching for figs he will go not to Scotland, "the land of the thistle," but to Arabia, the garden of figs.

Why so? Because like produces like. This is one of Nature's laws. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself; and it was so."

Here is the criterion by which we determine between brambles and berry-bushes, i.e. between the false and the true. The law works invariably, in every department of human life and observation: and it furnishes a canon of judgment by which to test infallibly the moral quality of things.

Suppose now the Bible be judged in that way.

There are millions of books in circulation. At a table so munificently furnished the judicious reader

will not eat at random but pick and choose, selecting what is best for him. The test question is, "What is the fruit of this or that book? Does it lighten life's burdens with innocent mirth? Does it inform the mind? Does it clarify the conscience? Does it strengthen the will that makes for a noble life? Will it enable me to contribute to the betterment of the world I am living in? And does it furnish the right sort of preparation for the life further on?"

It has been the fashion of late to publish lists of "the World's Greatest Books"; that is, of those which have most deeply and broadly influenced life and character. It might be supposed that all would agree on Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," Raleigh's "History of the World," Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," Locke's "On the Human Understanding," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Newton's "Principia," Walton's "Compleat Angler," Sir Thomas Browne's "Hydriotaphia," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Butler's "Analogy," Boswell's "Life of Johnson," "The Letters of Junius," Spenser's "Faerie Queen," and Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"; but there is a wide difference of opinion concerning even these.

Here, however, is a singular fact: no matter how many such lists are prepared or who prepares them you will invariably find them including one book, namely, the Bible. This fact is worth emphasizing, because it indicates a practical consensus of opinion that this particular Book is likely to do good, inasmuch as it has been doing good and only good all the days of its life thus far.

It is frequently said of the Bible that, in order to

arrive at a fair judgment respecting its merits, we must criticize it like other books. For the sake of the argument again, so be it. Here is the criterion: "By its fruits ye shall know it."

And fortunately its fruits are known. History furnishes abundant data for a comparison of its influence with that of other books. The fact that it exists at all is an illustration of the survival of the fittest and therefore a tribute to its excellence. The reason why it survives is because it is the one book which the world and the centuries, familiar with its power, would not willingly let die.

What is its influence on individual character? In other words, what sort of men and women does it make? Call the roll of the mighties; the noble army of martyrs; pioneers of truth; philanthropists; public benefactors like Howard and Wilberforce; philosophers like Locke and Bacon; scientists like Newton and Faraday; reformers like Luther and Knox; missionaries like Xavier and Livingstone; statesmen like William the Silent and Washington and Lincoln; poets like Milton; historians like Guizot; scholars like the learned Grotius. The time would fail me to tell of those who, drawing their inspiration from this Book, have written their names in the memory and gratitude of men.

But we, being humble folk, are more concerned with the fruit of the Bible as tested in the life and character of the average man. How about your own father and mother, who loved the Book and adjusted their lives to it? Or how about your friends and neighbours who profess to believe and practise it? Do they seem

to be helped or hurt by their devotion to its precepts? Did you ever hear of a man or woman who was demoralized by it? Are there any better people in the world than those who consistently live up to it? Do you know of anybody who ever plucked apples of Sodom from the branches of this tree?

"By its fruits ye shall know it."

Suppose we apply this criterion of judgment to other so-called sacred books.

If you would know the influence of the Analects of Confucius look at the Chinese. One who has lived in that country for many years says, "There is no mode of deception or fraud in which these people are not adepts. Lying is so common that they have almost lost the consciousness that it is wrong. Quarrelling, slandering and cursing, intrigues and brawls, are universal. Theft, extortion, robbery and piracy, suicide, infanticide and murder, lotteries, gambling shops and opium dens are common everywhere." How could it be otherwise when Confucianism, distinctly a moral and not a religious system, avowedly takes no cognizance of God?

If you would know the fruits of the Vedas look at the Brahmans of India, among whom there is an open, shameless and prevalent disregard of practically all the deep-founded and eternal distinctions between right and wrong. The Abbé du Bois says, "I have never seen a religious procession in India without its presenting to me the image of hell." The holiest of Brahmans is the twice-born Yogi, who sits by the roadside naked, with hair uncombed and the Vedas before him. His body is smeared with ashes and dung.

Ask him what he is doing, and he will tell you he is "losing himself in the ineffable One." His cabalistic sentence is "I am God! I am God!" He lives uselessly and dies stolidly with that blasphemy on his lips.

If you would know the fruits of the Tripitaka behold them exemplified in the life and character of the Buddhists. The central thought of their philosophy is expressed in the term *Nirvana,* which means the ultimate extinction of personality, as the perfume of the lotus flower is exhaled in air or as a drop of water sinks into the sea. They thus profess to believe in immortality; but who cares to be immortal when he does not know it? The result is apparent, says a writer, "in the cities of the dead, where tens of thousands lie unburied waiting for a lucky day; in the ringing of gongs and discharging of fireworks to keep away the evil spirits; in the incantations over the sick and honours paid to dead beggars to propitiate their ghosts; and in the pampering of monkeys and sacred pigs, as a work of merit, while men and women die of starvation in the streets."

Would you know the character of the Koran? Read it in the light of the recent massacres in Turkey. The three outstanding facts of Islam are War, Slavery and Sensuality. The Sword, the Auction Block and the Harem! What would you expect to pluck from Mohammed's tree? Its legitimate fruit is barbarism. Its mosques are planted in the regions of darkness and the shadow of death.

Would you know the Bible, now? Test it under the same law of fruitage.

It proposes to save men from the penalty and power of sin. Of all the religions of the world this is the only one that suggests the possibility of blotting out a mislived past and so removing the handicap of hope and aspiration.

It proposes also to sanctify the forgiven sinner or, in other words, to build up his character in truth and righteousness. And this it does by placing him under the transforming power of the Spirit of God.

Thus the Bible develops character. Who shall explain the subtle metaphysical force in this Book which somehow gets hold of the lingering possibilities in the soul of a reprobate and transforms him, changes his heart and conscience and will, so making a new man of him?

Has any other book such power? Does the Koran or the Zendavesta transform men in this manner and set their faces toward righteousness and heaven and God? An old Highlander once said to Claudius Buchanan, "I cannot argue with you; I cannot present theological facts or reasons; I cannot explain the philosophy of revelation; but I know this, that when I was a man of evil character the Bible got hold of me and quelled the tiger in me!" There is the master fact; this Book makes men. The best people, here, there, everywhere and always, are those who believe in the Bible and live that way.

If this fact be called in question let us put it to a practical test. Take the "Charities Directory of the City of New York." This is a compendium of above ten thousand organized forms of charity; and the singular fact is that these beneficences are practically

all carried on by friends of the Bible. The exceptions are so few that they can be enumerated on the fingers of a dozen men.

The critics of the Bible and of religious people profess to be doing wonders for the regeneration of society, but they are doing nothing of the sort. Words, words, loud boastful words! By their fruits ye shall know them.

Not that the friends of the Bible are above criticism. On the contrary they are vulnerable at many points and nobody knows it better than themselves. They do not claim to be good people, but only trying to be good and finding it no easy task. The really "good" people are all outside pointing their fingers at them. And meanwhile these derided folk are serving the world fairly well.

This is a point to be emphasized in view of the frequent strictures which are passed upon religious people for their alleged indifference to the demands of social service. It is not an uncommon thing to hear outsiders say, "You churchmen and Bible folk are so devoted to other worldiness that you care little or nothing for the sufferings of people here and now. While you are sending Bibles to Borria-boola-gha the needy are clamorous all about you. Why don't you feed the hungry and clothe the naked and do something to make this world a better place to live in?"

It would naturally be supposed that people who talk that way would themselves be very busily engaged in advancing the temporal welfare of their fellow-men; but statistics and observation do not point that way. There are, it is true, individual cases of philanthropy

among the non-religious; but the exceptions are relatively so few and individually so conspicuous as merely to prove the rule referred to.

Christian philanthropy, however, is differentiated from secular philanthropy by the fact that it does not concern itself exclusively for the temporal welfare of men. It does not confine itself to that small arc of the great circle which is called time, but deals with man as an immortal being. It reasons on this wise, "While it devolves upon me to smoothe the earthly pathway of man as far as possible, my supreme effort must always be devoted to his preparation for the unending æons of existence that await him. Wherefore, while I minister to his physical needs I must never forget the demands of his immortal soul." This is the philosophy of "a loaf of bread wrapped in a tract." This is why the call, "Come to Jesus" can never lose its timeliness. One who accepts the teaching of the Scriptures must needs believe that eternity is longer than time and formulate his life accordingly. Therefore the reproach of "other worldiness" is not well taken. The best man is the man who lives with eternity in view; and that not only for himself but for the next man. And this is the sort of man that the Bible makes; a far-seeing, right-living, man-loving man.

The friends of the Bible, take them by and large, are the best people in the world. If that statement be challenged, again let us test it. Take a hundred at random from among those who profess to believe in the Bible and strive to conform their lives to it; then take another hundred at random from those who reject the teachings of the Book; and place them in oppo-

site lines for comparison. We will cheerfully abide the issue.

On the one hand, among the unbelievers you will certainly find many who are notoriously wrong livers. Horace Greeley once remarked that while all the members of the opposing political party were not horse-thieves he was prepared to say that all horse-thieves belonged to it. In like manner while it is not claimed that all those who hate the Bible are conspicuously disreputable, it goes without saying that all notorious reprobates of every sort—rogues, rum-sellers, corrupt demagogues, enemies of society and government—are opposed to the Scriptures.

On the other hand, your hundred lovers of the Bible stand solidly for everything that makes for a square deal in this present world, for the uplift of the community and the defence of law and order, for the betterment of men not only here but hereafter. It is alleged that there are hypocrites among them. But why should attention be called to this fact? Do we ever hear of spurious atheists or infidels? Why not? Because imitation in such cases would not be worth while. Men do not counterfeit leather medals but golden eagles.

And why, when a Christian falls from grace, should he be pilloried for it? The fingers of the people are pointed at him. The newspapers blazon his guilt in such headlines as "ANOTHER DEACON GONE WRONG." Are atheists, infidels, Bible-haters treated in that manner? If one of them offends against morality is he pilloried for it? Do the newspapers ever announce "ANOTHER INFIDEL IN THE

MESHES OF THE LAW"? Why not? Because the world recognizes the logical fitness of things. It knows that when a man without religious principle offends against the foundations of truth and righteousness he does only what is expected of him. But when a Christian is inconsistent he offends not only against Christ but against public opinion: since everybody knows what a Christian ought to be.

We do not undertake to explain the metaphysical force in the Bible—the force that is likened to a two-edged sword which divides asunder the soul and spirit of a man—but conversion is a fact, an indisputable fact. The Chancellor of Queen Candace was converted by reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; and centuries later Lord Rochester, a virulent infidel, was converted by reading the same. This sort of thing is going on all the time. Has any other book such power? Do the Shastras, the Zendavesta, the Koran or the Analects of Confucius turn men about, reform them, transform them and set their faces towards the better life?

This then is the master fact; *the Bible makes men.* The poet Alexander Pope, himself an unbeliever, on being asked to define a Christian, made this brief answer, "A Christian is the highest style of man." If this be true, it is only rational to conclude that it is his devotion to the principles contained in the Holy Scriptures which makes him so.

XI

ITS INFLUENCE ON NATIONAL LIFE

THE three world powers to-day are America and England and Germany, with others forging to the front.

As for England it was publicly affirmed by Queen Victoria that the Bible was "the secret of its greatness."

As for Germany, at the close of the Franco-Prussian War it was declared by Père Hyacinthe to his people that the reason for their calamitous defeat lay in the fact that they were irreligious, while every German soldier had a Bible in his knapsack.

As for America, its whole constitutional fabric is permeated with the teachings of the divine Word.

Of the other nations now most rapidly coming to the front Japan stands foremost. A dozen years ago a Japanese student asked to be enrolled as a member of the church to which I minister. His name is still upon its roster. At the conclusion of his post-graduate course at Columbia University he received the degree of Doctor of Laws. On the eve of his departure to his native country he left with me his Japanese Bible as a token of friendship. I said to him, "Are you going back to advocate the teachings of that Book?" His answer was: "I love my country. We want your light, your freedom, your constitutional rights. We

want your western civilization; and I am satisfied that we cannot have it without taking the Bible along with it." That man is now one of the foremost and best known publicists of Japan, and he still remains a firm believer in the Word of God.

The consummate fruit of Christianity is Civilization. Take a map of the world and draw a line around so much of its territory as has felt the benign influence of the Gospel; and you have enclosed substantially all its light, humanity and civilization. The lands which you have circumscribed are significantly known as "Christendom." This enclosed area is so called because it embraces every region which, having the Scriptures, has prospered under the luminous shadow of the Cross. All outside is darkness and barbarism. All within is light and progress. This is what the Bible has done; this is what the Bible is doing.

"By its fruits ye shall know it."

It will not be amiss to revert more particularly, at this point, to our own country as one of the consummate fruits of the Scripture. It is not enough to recall its original baptism as San Salvador, "The Land of the Saviour," nor will it suffice to eulogize our forefathers as Christian men. The important fact is that the great principles which underlie our Government are Bible principles, so distinctly so that our welfare and destiny are involved in our loyalty to them.

The first of these principles is the Rights of Man, as formulated in the word "equality," which is the antithesis of caste. The proposition which differentiates our Republic not only from all monarchies but from all other so-called "Constitutional governments"

is laid down in the Preamble of the Declaration of Independence as a self-evident fact, to wit, "all men are created free and equal with certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Whence came that proposition?

At the time when the King James version of the Scriptures was put forth the doctrine of human equality was less real than a vision of the night. Man as man was scarcely thought of. The people were mere flies and earth-worms in the sight of His Majesty and the Titled Orders. It is true Magna Charta had been signed some centuries before; but Magna Charta was no symbol of popular rights. The people had no part nor lot in it. In fact there were no People. The barons made their demands on John Lackland and his answer was simply a concession of baronial rights. The last man to recognize the people was the royal patron of the King James version. It was he who exiled Andrew Melville for insisting on the right of public assemblage in Scotland. All praise to Melville, who on that occasion dared to pluck his sovereign by the sleeve, saying, "Sire, thou dost forget that there hath been born in Scotland of late a King before whom all the Stuarts must needs doff their bonnets." And when James inquired who that might be, he calmly answered, "King People, Sire!" To the truth of that prophecy the constitutional government of Grēat Britain bears testimony in these better days.

So far as the rights of the people have been realized in these centuries it is in pursuance of the teaching of Scripture, where every man is represented as being, by virtue of his divine birthright, the equal of his fellow-

man. The manifesto of Paul on Mars' Hill, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth," struck the keynote for the future. The bell that rang from Independence Hall, "All men are created free and equal" was but a clear, distant echo of it.

The second of the great ideas which underlie our Republic is the Sanctity of Law, as formulated in the word, "government," which is the antithesis of personal independence.

The basis of social order is the just recognition by every man of the rights of his fellow-men. One who dwells alone in the desert may do as he pleases; but if another join him his personal freedom is so far forth abridged as that he is now free only to do that which does not trespass on the freedom of the other man. As still others arrive there comes to be a compact; that social compact is government, whose basis is law.

The Scriptures stand for law. The two great ethical symbols of the world are the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount. Out of the former has grown the jurisprudence of all civilized nations; out of the latter has developed the true theory of social rights. The civilization of any people is precisely measured by their regard for the sanctity of law on the one hand, and for the well-being of the individual on the other. The best illustration of good citizenship in the history of the world was witnessed in the passion of Christ, who yielded unmurmuringly to the unjust decree of "the powers that be," because they were "ordained of God," and in his vicarious death in our behalf set

forth the perfect excellence of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as ye would be done by."

The third of our great national propositions is the Voluntary Principle in Religion: which is formulated in the word "non-conformity," the antithesis of which is the uniformity of a political church.

The policy of James I was to require all men to think alike in religious things. He knew only the Establishment. He hated the Catholics, despised the Puritans and consistently maligned the Presbyterians. He exiled John Robinson and his associates for refusing to pray according to the prescribed form or kneel at the lifting of the mass. How far yon little candle throws its beams! The time was coming when that same John Robinson would go down to Delft Haven and give godspeed to the *Mayflower* with her cargo of Puritans setting out for the New World in search of freedom to worship God.

To the mind of James these men were "dissenters." The word is a reproach to thinking men as it is an offence to the gracious God. He puts no thumb-screws on the conscience. We are free to believe or disbelieve; free to obey or to disobey and take the consequences; free to be saved or to be lost. He draws us only with "the cords of a man."

"Though God be good and free be heaven,
No force divine can love compel:
And though the song of sins forgiven
Should ring through lowest hell,
The sweet persuasion of his Voice
Respects our sanctity of will:
He giveth day: thou hast thy choice
To walk in darkness still."

The fourth of the great Scriptural ideas is one which has not yet found its realization in our Republic; that is the duty of Communication, as it is written, "To do good and to communicate, forget not." This finds its best expression in universal evangelization, which is the antithesis of war.

There are two means of conquest, and two only: namely, War and the Word. "Go fight! Go conquer! Go slay!" cry the Great Powers; and the earth shakes with the footfall of mobilized armies. "Go preach!" says Christ; and behold, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that publish peace!

In this great Bible truth we find the secret of the ultimate restoration of the world to God. "Put up thy sword into the sheath," said Jesus, "for they that take the sword shall perish by it." Wrong, error, barbarism and all the forces that make for impiety and inhumanity are destined to yield to the expulsive power of truth and righteousness, as shadows flee before the rising of the sun. The key to the future is in the promise, "My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

At the gateway of America stands a colossal statue of "Liberty Enlightening the World." If the Bible were substituted for the torch in the uplifted hand of the Goddess of Liberty we should have a true parable of the obligation due from our Christian republic to the unchristianized peoples of the earth. We speak of our country as "God's country"; and surely he hath not dealt so with any people: but the principles which dominate our national life are like loaves which are

best enjoyed by sharing them with others. Wherefore it behooves us to send the Bible, the divine source of our prosperity, to the uttermost parts of the earth. So shall we, in the spirit of a larger patriotism, justify the otherwise selfish sentiment of our national hymn:

"Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King!"

XII

ITS PLACE IN THE FOREFRONT OF EVENTS

THE keynote of modern progress was struck by Wiclif, A.D. 1380. In the Museum at Prague there is a symbolical picture of the Reformation as a fagot-fire to which Wiclif is applying the torch. His watchword was, "Let us get back to the Bible!" The search-warrant which Christ himself placed in the hands of the people when He said, "Search the Scriptures," had been snatched away and appropriated by the Pope and hierarchy. So far as the people were concerned the Bible had long been a closed book, kept in cloisters or chained to the high-altars of cathedrals. When given to the multitudes it was recited in an unknown tongue. Wiclif said, "I will translate the Scriptures into the vernacular; so that every ploughboy may read them as he toils among the furrows." His Bible on being published was immediately placed in the Index Expurgatorius. He himself was persecuted to the death and after; for by order of the Council of Constance his bones were burned and their ashes cast upon the river which carried them to the sea. But the keynote of Protestantism had been struck: "A true Bible and an open one!"

In that same picture of the bonfire at Prague there is another man blowing the flame. This is Luther, who nailed the ninety-five theses of Protestantism to the

chapel door at Wittenberg, A.D. 1517. While still in monastic orders he had happened upon a volume of the Scriptures. He knew them only as a forbidden book. He read it furtively until he came to the place where it is written, "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Meanwhile he had grown lean and haggard. The friars saluted him, "Good appetite, brother Martin"; but the refectory had no charms for him. He returned again and again to the forbidden book. Presently he read, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." The peril of his spiritual state overwhelmed him. At length he came upon the words, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." Then the light began to break!

He betook himself to Rome. Great were his anticipations; a sore disappointment awaited him. He had hoped to see the holy brethren serving God in vows of poverty and self-denial; he found a company of priests with round bodies and rubicund faces, dwelling in sumptuous halls and imbibing the stores of famous wine-cellars. He looked for hair-cloth; and behold, purple and fine linen, wealth, splendour and luxury. Here were churches, marvels of architecture, adorned by the art of Raphael and Titian. Here were Bibles, in Latin, chained to the high altars. Here, where he looked for humble friars, were arrogant prelates devoted to ambition and political intrigue. They smiled at him as a simple rustic. Once as he was saying mass a neighbour elbowed him with the remark, "While

thou art saying it once we could repeat it seven times." Ill at ease he determined on penance. He would climb the Sacred Stairway on his knees. Half-way up he seemed to hear a voice saying, "The just shall live by faith!" The day broke! He stood erect, a believer in the Scriptures and in Christ as his only Saviour. Out of that experience came the indomitable courage with which he ever after defended his faith until in the presence of secular and ecclesiastical potentates, he exclaimed, "Here I stand: I cannot otherwise; God help me!"

As Protestants we stand as Luther did for an open Bible and a free conscience to interpret it. In the forty years prior to the Reformation no less than sixteen hundred "heretics" were burned at the stake. All of them died for the crime of doing their own thinking. A man has a right, so far as other men are concerned, to be a heretic at will; aye, or an infidel if he chooses, since each must answer for himself before God. Alone I was born into the world, alone am I called to face the responsibilities and vicissitudes of life, alone must I pass through the Valley of the Shadow and alone must I finally stand before the Judge of all.

The men who have taken this position have been pioneers of progress along the ages. The Bible and progress go hand in hand. The motto of the Papal Church is *Semper idem,* i.e., "always the same." The temperature of Saint Peter's at Rome is said to be invariable. But true religion is *nunquam idem;* that is, it moves with the moving world. There are two important facts that never change. One is Christ,

who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever; yet the world is constantly catching new glimpses of the beauty of his face. The other is the Bible, which remains unaltered and unalterable, because it was divinely sealed with seven seals. There is no appendix, no addendum. Nevertheless, as John Robinson said, there are "new lights ever bursting forth from it." These are the two unchangeable facts: Christ and the Bible, between which the Church moves onward in new enterprises to cumulative conquests of faith.

Such is our religion as outlined by Providence in the logic of events. Its only pontiff is Christ, whose name is above every other which is named in heaven or on earth. Its only hierarchy is the procession of torch bearers, who go with his Gospel to illuminate the dark places of cruelty and the habitations of death, and the procession of reapers who come from yellow fields bringing their sheaves with them. Its only Book is that which was written by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Its only creed is that which is framed from the Scriptures by men sitting at the Master's feet. Its grandest cathedrals are the lives of righteous men who realize their kingly birth and destiny and who know their rights and knowing dare maintain. Its most fervent litany is this, "From all tyranny of mind, conscience and heart, good Lord deliver us!" Its sublimest music is the breaking of chains and the attendant anthem:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all."

We are now prepared to lay down this proposition: *The Bible is at the forefront of every great movement making for light and humanity and civilization throughout the world to-day.*

(1) In supporting that proposition let us affirm at the outset that the Bible stands foremost in maintaining the sanctions of domestic life. This to begin with, because all happiness centres in the home and all civilization radiates from it. There is no picture to compare with the love in a cottage, where parents and children gather around the family altar. Blessed are they who can look back through the lengthening vista of years to the training of such a home. Its memory never fades. I am sorry for the man whose deepest heart does not respond to the solemn pathos of "The Cotter's Saturday Night."

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And 'Let us worship God!' he says with solemn air.

"Then, kneeling down, to heaven's eternal King,
The saint, the father and the husband prays:
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise
In such society, yet still more dear,
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere."

What makes a home like that? The Bible! The world knows that this assures the joy and sanctity of domestic life.

(2) The Bible leads the way, also, in the betterment of social life. It stands for law and order and all the conditions that make a community a desirable place to live in.

If you were on your way westward in search of a desirable place to settle down and "grow up with the country," and if, in your loneliness and uncertainty, the open door of a wayside house should disclose a Bible you would instantly say, "I can safely sleep here to-night." And suppose that, the next morning on awakening you should hear the ringing of church bells, would you not say, "This is the village for me?"

In this connection it may be well to recall the words of James Russell Lowell: "When the keen scrutiny of skeptics has found a place on this planet ten miles square, where a decent man can live in decency, comfort and security, supporting and educating his children unspoiled and unpolluted, a place where age is reverenced, infancy respected, womanhood honoured and human life held in due regard; when skeptics can find such a place, only ten miles square, on this globe, where the Gospel of Christ has not gone and cleared the way and laid the foundations and made decency and security possible, it will then be in order for the skeptical literati to move thither and ventilate their views."

The Bible builds no dramshops, no bagnios, no gambling dens: it builds instead schools and hospitals and institutions that make for the uplift of all sorts and

conditions of men. This is a fact so obvious and universally conceded that it is quite unnecessary to dwell upon it.

(3) Furthermore the Bible is at the forefront of our industrial life. One day last week I watched from my study window many thousands of striking handicraftsmen marching by. In that procession I observed a few American flags, a considerable number of others inscribed with the ominous shibboleths of socialism, but not a single one that betokened the remotest acquaintance with the industrial ethics set forth in the divine Book of the Law. Yet these honest toilers—foreign born with scarcely an exception—should be advised of the fact that but for Christ and the Bible there would be no Third Estate, no wage system, nor any possibility of striking against oppression in our country or anywhere else.

At the beginning of the Christian era the only toiler was a bondslave, with no remuneration but his meagre board and keep. Then came the Carpenter of Nazareth with his great manifesto, "The labourer is worthy of his hire!" In the process of the succeeding years the Bible—which was and is the Carpenter's Book—has carried the same manifesto to the limits of the civilized world; so that Christendom to-day marks the boundaries of the recognized rights of the labouring class.

No doubt there are wrongs to be righted still; but point me, if you can, to any land without the Bible where the protest of the employed against the arbitrary rule of the employer is permitted in any form. Could the builders of the pyramids strike against their task-

master with his whip of scorpions? Are there any strikes in Senegambia or Tierra del Fuego? If not why not? Because the Sun has not risen upon them! The Carpenter with his Book has been marching down the centuries and urging the square deal of the Golden Rule, so that wherever he has gone capital and labour are beginning to see face to face: but nowhere outside of Christendom is there any such condition of things. Nowhere else is there a gleam of promise of the day "when man to man the world o'er shall brothers be."

(4) Further still the Bible, as we have already seen, is at the forefront of the world's national life. The reason why we foreigners are here—for we are all foreigners at a greater or less remove—is because we believe America to be the best country the sun ever shone on. It is a refuge for the oppressed of all nations; and they are coming from everywhere. Why do they turn their steps this way? They are fleeing from the lands of a chained Bible to the land of an open Bible! They are escaping from the oppression of darkness to mingle with a people whom the light of truth makes free.

The youngest boy in our public schools knows that Columbus discovered America in 1492; but he does not know perhaps that America was not peopled for a hundred years after that. This is a noteworthy fact. What happened in the interim? A tremendous cataclysm that turned the world upside down! A movement for the unchaining of the Book. If Luther had not issued his theses against the closing of the Scriptures there would have been—so far as we can see—

no scattering of the night. If Holland had not fought for an open Bible the "Half Moon" would never have sailed this way. If Cromwell and the Roundheads had not championed the right of personal interpretation the "Mayflower" and her gallant crew would never have been heard of. The people came, and the people are still coming, because a closed Bible means tyranny and oppression while an open Bible insures life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Our country is a Christian country. It was founded, we repeat, on the principles laid down in the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount; and it has developed along the lines marked out in the divine Book of the Law. In the year 1777 a strange thing happened. The Revolutionary War had arrested the output of the printing presses, and the result was a famine of the Word. Congress was petitioned to relieve the situation; and what did Congress do? It authorized the importation of twenty thousand Bibles from Holland to be distributed among the people! Would Congress go so far in these days? I fear not. But this is what our forefathers thought of the Book of the Law.

But if it be true that our Government is founded on the Scriptures, that its history and jurisprudence, its freedom and prosperity, its proud memories and bright prospects are all interwoven with the truths and precepts of Revelation, will you tell me how it happens that the politicians in many of our states feel free to discriminate against the Bible? The General Assembly of New York recently turned down a bill calling for the reading of the Bible in the public schools. Mean-

while some of the schoolhouses on Manhattan Island are open every evening of the week for the propagation of anarchy and socialism. The pernicious doctrines of Karl Marx are allowed, but the Bible is taboo. Spinsters are permitted to discuss eugenics and birth-control but religion is under the ban. Ex-convicts are welcomed but Christ is ruled out. And all the while the Christian community makes no practical protest but complacently foots the bills!

(5) Finally, the Bible leads the march in international affairs. And now you are pointing across the sea and saying, "Behold the war of Christian nations! Is this the best that an open Bible can show for itself?" The point is well taken. But Christian nations are no more perfect than Christian men. The inconsistency would be unnoted were it not for the universal conviction that the prevailing war is not the outcome of loyalty to the Scriptures but in violation of them.

And will you tell me, in passing, why you point derisively at France and England and Germany and Russia and Austria without a word about Turkey and other Ottoman states? Because you are aware that the Bible teaches peace while the Koran teaches war. Because all the world knows that "frightfulness" is expected of a non-Christian nation while the very opposite is expected of those that have the Bible and live up to it. Thus obviously your acrid criticism becomes a glowing tribute to the Word of God.

But there are influences at work that will presently make an end of war. What and whence are they? With one consent we say "the principles of justice and

humanity and universal concord which are laid down in the Scriptures." All Courts of Arbitration are built upon those principles. Even in the grapple of the nations the Bible forges to the front. I hold in my hand a khaki Testament just received from the Belgian firing-line. On its fly-leaf are these words:

"August 25th, 1914.

I ask you to put your trust in God. He will watch over you and strengthen you. In this little Book you will find guidance when you are in health, comfort when you are in sickness, and strength when you are in adversity.

ROBERTS."

This message from the beloved "General Bobs" is being read by the men in the trenches: and the Gospel which it commends is thus making a *reductio ad absurdum* of this and every war.

It will be heard from in the Council of the Great Powers which will presently assemble to determine upon the conditions of peace. An invisible Presence will be there, an overtowering Figure, beside whom Kings and Kaisers and Czars and Emperors will dwindle into insignificance. The last word in that Council will be spoken by the divine Man with the Bible in his hand. The Prince of Peace will ultimately bring in the Truce of God.

Let us therefore have confidence in the Book. When the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines at Ebenezer the prosperity of Israel went with it. Old Eli sat by the gate awaiting the news of battle. A messenger came running with his clothes rent and ashes upon his head. "What is there done, my son?"

—"Israel is fled before the enemy! There hath been a great slaughter! Thy two sons are slain, and *the Ark of the Lord is taken!*"—And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark, that Eli fell backward and died.

Woe worth the day when the Bible—symbolized by this Ark of the Covenant—shall lose its place in the loyal hearts of God's people! But that shall never be. The divine veracity stands pledged to the perpetuity of the divine Word until it shall accomplish the purpose whereunto God hath sent it.

For so runs the promise: "As the rain and the snow cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth and maketh it to bring forth and bud and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Thus it is written and thus it must be; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

XIII

IT IS CHRIST'S BOOK

THE storm-centres of religious history are Christ and the Bible.

As to this Jesus which is called the Christ, who is he? Is he what he claimed to be, the only-begotten Son of the Father, or a trickster and dissembler? This is the Chateau Hougomont around which the Waterloo of the centuries has been waged; for it is understood on all hands that if Christ could be disposed of the fabric of Christianity would vanish into thin air.

And when the controversy has not been about Christ it has centred in the Bible. What is this old Book? Is it what it claims to be, "God-breathed," or is its distinction due only to certain venerable associations? Are there any clear characteristics which lift it out of the category of other books? Can it be received with confidence as an "infallible rule of faith and practice"; or are those who so regard it merely a sort of fetich-worshippers? Is it the Truth, or does it only contain truth, that is, more or less of it? What think ye?

These two are the controversial centres of our religion—as they ought to be—and they are really and substantially one. The porch of Solomon's temple was upheld by two brazen pillars, the names of which were

Jachin or strength and *Boaz* or continuance. A Jew going up to the temple, faint and heavy-hearted, felt his vigour and confidence renewed as he gazed upon these massive pillars with their beautiful capitals of lily-work. Thus do Christ and the Bible uphold our religion. While they remain it is safe. And they are destined to abide forever; because "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

It is significant that both Christ and the Bible are characterized as "the Word of God." How indeed could God reveal himself to men otherwise than by his Word? He is seen in nature but not clearly. It would be difficult for a man to look so far "through nature up to nature's God" as to be able to say "Abba, Father!" He would be much more likely, standing amid the bewildering glories of the earth and overarching heavens, to cry aloud in desperate desire, "O God, if thou art or wheresoever thou art, speak to me!"

And God has spoken: As it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God; and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Language is the medium through which we become acquainted with each other. You are discovering what sort of person I am by what I am saying now. In like manner God makes us acquainted with himself through his Word. The incarnation was, so to speak, the articulation of the divine Mind. We are not surprised therefore to hear the incarnate Son claim to be a full and complete revelation of the Father. On one occasion Philip said to him, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us";

and Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. How sayest thou then, 'Show us the Father?' Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?"

But this was not enough. God must speak further if he would make himself heard by all mankind through all succeeding ages. Jesus in his earthly life was hemmed in by a narrow environment of time and space. His ministry lasted but three years, during which he canvassed only a small portion of an inconsiderable province in a remote corner of the globe. Should he content himself with the healing of a few folk and preaching to some thousands of stiff-necked and unregenerate Jews? Nay, all nations and all centuries would be groaning and travailing together for him. The Word must traverse the world! The Sun of Righteousness must go forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and no generation must be hid from the light of it. But how should that be accomplished? Enter, the written Word; which is the reflex of Christ, his universal and perpetual shining forth. Through the Scriptures he is made known to all generations, to the uttermost parts of the earth and to the remotest end of time.

The pages of Scripture, like the leaves of the tree of life, are "for the healing of the nations." They flutter forth upon the winds of heaven bearing the tidings of redemption to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. If Christ is to reign universally it is because, under the dispensation of the Spirit, the propaganda is being successfully carried on through

the instrumentality of the written Word. This is the weapon of the Kingdom; as it is written, "The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God." Thus the Bible is the complement and counterpart of Christ. The two Words are one; and this binomial Word is a complete, continuous and universal revelation of God.

Do they, then, "stand or fall together?" Nothing is said of their falling. Christ and the Bible stand together, and standing thus they stand forever; neither can fall.

We hear much in these times about a "Christocentric" religion. The word has a very attractive look and mellifluous sound; but there is reason to fear that under certain conditions it may be made to serve Christ himself an ill turn. If it be used to emphasize the need of a profounder regard for the teaching of our Lord and Saviour let us cordially assent to it; but if ever it serves as a mere subterfuge for rejecting or minimizing Christ's unswerving loyalty to the Scriptures then we are bound to regard it with suspicion. For nothing is more certain than that Christ himself would be the very first to reject a Bibleless Gospel, no matter what sweet adjectives were attached to it. The ultimate test of devotion to him is faith in the sum total of his teaching every way.

Let us now observe what the Bible has to say about Christ: and afterward what Christ has to say about the Bible. It will thus appear how they stand together as complementary each to the other.

To begin with, the Book is something more than a mere biography of Christ. To say that its purpose is exclusively to outline the scheme of salvation, in its

narrow sense, may furnish a taking phrase but not a complete statement of fact. There are many things in Scripture which have no direct bearing on the way to escape from the penalty and power of sin. And whatever the Book contains, whether theological, ethical or scientific, is absolutely true. Thus it is written, "All Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work," i.e., that he may have a well-rounded and symmetrical equipment for life every way.

It is correct to say, however, that the golden thread running through all the Scriptures is Christological. Their central theme is Christ. This is true both of the Law and the Prophets.

The common title of the Scriptures among the Jews was "The Law and the Prophets."

The Moral Law as delivered from Sinai is a schoolmaster to lead sinners to Christ. The Ceremonial Law in all its rites and symbols points directly to him. Its local centre was the Tabernacle, which, from the brazen altar at its door to the Ark of the Covenant in its remote Holy of Holies, was everywhere typical of him. Its calendrical centre was the Day of Atonement, when every occurrence, from the robing of the priest in fine linen clean and white to the sending away of the scapegoat to Azazel, was eloquent of him.

The same may be affirmed of the Prophets. The beginning of prophecy was the protevangel in Eden, "The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head." As years passed on and men forgot God and lapsed

into the abominations of the heathen, Abram was called out of Ur of the Chaldees and "chosen" to preserve monotheism and hand it down through succeeding generations until the advent of Christ. To him was the promise given, "I will bless thee and make thy name great; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," a promise to which Jesus himself ascribed a distinct Messianic import. The Psalms of David are so full of Christ that they furnish much of the material for our Christian hymn-books. Isaiah for a similar reason is called "the evangelical prophet." He foretells Christ as a child, a teacher, a wonderworker, a man of sorrows, a vicarious sacrifice, dying, triumphing over death and evermore living as the Mediator and Advocate of penitent souls. Daniel saw the great world-powers rising and flourishing and passing away to make room for the universal dominion of the Messiah. The last of the prophets, Malachi, in the gathering gloom of the long Egyptian night of four hundred years which intervened between the two Testaments, waved his torch, crying, "The night cometh; but be of good courage, the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings!" Thus Christ is discernible everywhere in Law and Prophecy, like the theme or undertone of an oratorio; wherefore it would be obviously impossible to keep the Bible and let Christ go.

What now, on the other hand, was the attitude of Christ toward the Bible?

To begin with, he was familiar with it. He learned it *memoriter* in his boyhood; and ever after made it his "infallible rule of faith and practice." In each of

his three temptations in the wilderness he used it as effective foil against the adversary. When urged to change stones into bread to satisfy his hunger he answered, "Nay, I cannot! For I remember what my mother taught me out of the Book, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'" When urged to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple to prove his Godhood by his superiority to natural laws, he answered again, "Nay, I cannot! For I remember what the Bible says, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" And when urged finally to avoid the agony of the cross and accept the world's sovereignty in return for a single act of homage rendered to its *de facto* prince, he answered, "I cannot! For the Book says, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.'" Thus in every case the Bible was his stand-by. "It is written" was enough for him. And blessed is every one of his followers who can defend himself in like manner with the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

(1) But now, to be more specific: Christ declares the Scriptures to be true. He does not scruple to call them "truth." He does not say that they "contain" but that they are the Word of God. In his sacerdotal prayer in behalf of his disciples he pleads, "Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth." A follower of Christ ought to be willing to follow him in his indorsement of the Scriptures no less than in faithful service. He affixed his seal to the story of the Deluge, saying, "As it was in the days of Noah so shall the coming of the Son of Man be: they were

eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and the flood came and swept them all away." He believed in the story of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain by fire and brimstone from heaven, in the healing efficacy of the brazen serpent, in the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, and in Jonah in the whale's belly. He thus gave an explicit assent to the so-called "fables" of the Old Testament which are so abhorrent to many modern critics. He was probably as well advised as most of our Biblical exegetes respecting the real facts bearing upon the question of inerrancy; and, knowing all, he did not hesitate to indorse the entire trustworthiness of those very portions of Scripture that are most vigorously assailed in these days.

As to the Pentateuch, he not only endorsed its trustworthiness but repeatedly ascribed its authorship to Moses: as where he asked, "Did not Moses give you the Law?" And with respect to Deuteronomy, which the destructive critics have pronounced to be a substantial forgery, he placed a peculiar sanction upon it. In his temptation in the wilderness the words with which he repelled the adversary on each occasion were from Deuteronomy! A critic of the modern school has recently written, "The Bible is no better than a mass-book for stopping a bullet, nor as good as holy water for putting out a fire." But our divine Master evidently thought otherwise when he made this book of Deuteronomy an effective shield against the approaches of the tempter, putting out his fiercest fire with water from Siloa's brook.

As to the scientific propositions of the Scriptures,

our Lord endorsed the cosmogony of Moses and those early records upon which rest the ethnology and philology of our time. The assault upon the science of the Scripture is by no means recent. Julian the Apostate in his time undertook to cast reproach upon it. But while the theories of "science falsely so-called" have passed through no end of kaleidoscopic changes along the pathway of the centuries, the Bible continues to hold its own. And when such scientists as Dana, Guyot, Faraday and others too numerous to mention assert its substantial truth, we do not feel called upon to withdraw or qualify faith in it.

As to the historical parts of the Old Testament, our Lord put his distinct sanction upon them; and the recent researches of archæologists furnish a cumulative confirmation. Professor Sayce affirms that no less than seventy-seven events in Assyrian History as given in Scripture, have been corroborated by recent excavations. In any case, however, the important fact is that Jesus Christ never called these historic annals in question, but positively as well as tacitly placed his endorsement upon them.

As to prophecy. The pastor of one of our evangelical churches is reported to have said, "I know of no one passage in the Prophets which can certainly be said to point to an event beyond the near future of the writer." If so, then Jesus was mistaken when he said, "Moses wrote of me"; and again, "These are they which testify of me." He found the Old Testament full of predictions respecting himself and his redemptive work and of predictions pointing to his-

tory still in the remote future, even to the events of the last days.

As to these particular parts of the record which have been most bitterly assailed by the modern school of critics, it should be enough, as already intimated, to mention our Lord's reference to and implied endorsement of the story of Adam and Eve, Abel, Noah and the Flood, Abraham, the destruction of Sodom, Lot's wife, Jacob's ladder, Moses and the burning bush, the manna, the brazen serpent, David, Solomon, the Queen of Sheba, Elijah raising the widow's son, Elisha and Naaman, and Jonah. As to the story of Jonah in the whale's belly our Lord adventured the validity of his entire ministry upon it. The Jews clamoured for a sign; he said, "There shall no sign be given but the sign of Jonas the prophet; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Yet we are told that the story of Jonah is a fable pure and simple, no more trustworthy than that of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp. To what an ignoble anticlimax does this reduce the confident challenge of Jesus: as if he had said, "As surely as Aladdin wrought wonders by rubbing his magical lamp, so surely shall I rise again from the dead and bring life and immortality to light!"

But there are those who are unwilling to concede that Christ's authority was conclusive upon this point. They say, "He had his limitations."

It is granted that our Lord, in subjecting himself to the conditions of our earthly life, was pleased to lay aside the full exercise of his divine powers; he held

his omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence in abeyance; but never so that at any given moment he could not summon them at will.

His limitations, whatever they may have been, were certainly not such as to expose him to the liability of error or to the danger of uttering an untruth. To assert this would be to say a monstrous thing, for it would reduce our divine Teacher to the level of Mohammed and Joseph Smith. It is manifest that this position is impossible to any follower of Christ. One of the fathers of modern unbelief was indeed pleased to say on a certain occasion, when reminded of a divine statement, "I am not willing to receive that upon the authority of any such person as God." It is related, also that in a recent meeting of evangelical ministers the question being asked, "If Moses did not write the Pentateuch, why did Jesus Christ say that he did?" a voice replied: "Because he knew no better." It is incredible however that such views should be entertained by any of the sincere followers of Christ.

As if to anticipate the current objection to his testimony on the ground of human limitations, it was asserted by our Lord that the Father was himself responsible for his teaching. He said: "I can do nothing of myself" and again: "My teaching is not mine but his that sent me"; and again: "I speak not of myself, but the Father who sent me hath given me a commandment what I shall say"; and again: "The things which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak"; and again: "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." So that to question the teaching of Jesus with respect to the

Scriptures is not merely to doubt the statement of one who was subject to human limitations; it is to call in question the veracity of the living God.*

(2) Then observe the eloquent silence of Jesus with respect to all those alleged errors and discrepancies which so vex the souls of certain of our learned folk. Did he know that these blunders were to be found in the sacred pages? If the Mosaic cosmogony is fabulous how is it that he uttered no word against it? And

* At this point, having observed our Lord's calm acceptance of the truth of the Oracles with never a word of adverse reflection upon them in any way, it will be profitable to mark some of the reckless statements made by leaders of the Higher Criticism with respect to the same Book.

Kuenen says, "In the eyes of the writers everything was subordinate to their object, so that they often sacrificed what we consider very important interests to it, historical truth, for example. As a rule they concerned themselves very little with the question whether what they narrated really happened so or not. This is why the Old and New Testaments are so full of legends."

Knappert: "The Old Testament is rich in legends and myths. We may take as examples the stories of the first human pair, the Fall, Cain and Abel, the Deluge, the tower of Babel, God's appearance to Abraham, and Jacob's wrestling. These stories have no historical foundation whatever. When a prophet or priest related something about bygone times he never hesitated to modify what he knew of the past, and he did not think twice about touching it up from his own imagination, simply that it might be more conducive to the end he had in view and chime in better with his opinion. Our own notions of honour and good faith would never permit this."

Wellhausen: "The historical sphere created by itself is nowhere found within actual history. Thus it holds itself in

why did he not denounce those imprecatory Psalms which are "too horrible to be read" in some of our modern pulpits? How is it that he did not expose the falsity of those prophecies concerning himself which "have never been fulfilled and never can be because their time has gone by?"

Surely it is not too much to suppose that Jesus was an honest man. He seems to have been a fervent hater of shams and impostures, lying frontlets and phylacteries, false traditions of the elders and deceptions of

the air by its own waistband. The dislocation of the narrative by monstrous growths of legislative matter is not to be imputed to the editor; it is the work of the unedited Priest Code, and is certainly intolerable."

Dillman: The Hexateuch is "not an authentic picture of the legislation of Moses. Where the author had no historical accounts he sketches freely an imaginary picture, e.g., Noah's ark, course of the Flood, tabernacle (after the manner of a movable holy tent, richly furnished), the order of the camp and march, the determination of the boundaries of the tribes by lot under Joshua, the numbers of each tribe in Moses' day, the quantity of manna that fell, etc. These are not to be taken historically."

Reuss: The Exodus is "a bald fiction: the tabernacle, the camp and the arranged parade march in the desert, the large numbers of the pretended census, and many other things that exceed by far the old sagas, and are really not sagas of the early days but dreams of an impoverished generation."

Holzinger: "The most numerous and worst possibilities in the Hexateuch are from the sagas. The whole chronology of the earliest history is worthless; its name-lists are bare-faced inventions; it abounds in gross, sheer, mechanically enlarged miracles; its historical presuppositions of the giving of the law are whimsies that force a smile."

Smend: "It seems almost a silly trick when the author of

every sort. Is it possible that his eyes were not as clear, in this particular, as those of our recent Biblical scholars? Or was his soul not so sensitive as theirs with regard to these dreadful things in Scripture? We are in a dilemma. Was he unscrupulous or merely ignorant? Must we put the most severe limitations upon his knowledge, assuming that he knew no better than to let these errors pass unchallenged; or must we impugn his ingenuousness? In either case we could scarcely receive him as our divine Saviour and spiritual

the Priest Code makes the Sabbath a duty because God rested on that day. The Israelites received the Sabbath from the Canaanites. The representation of the Pentateuch proves itself not historical. A heathen myth is the substance of Genesis, i.e., a product of Babylonian science. The life of Abraham is unthinkable and false; there was no covenant of God with Abraham. That was the invention of a later age."

Piepenbring: "The Priest Code, the heart of the Pentateuch, is legend, myth, saga, tradition, and not trustworthy, a proved historical fiction, bald, transparent fiction, artifice, fantasy, false history, whimsies that force a smile, absurd, impossible, contradictory and inconceivable, unthinkable and false, a bare-faced invention."

Riehm: "Not only did the authors of the Pentateuch compose the speeches of the actors, as freely as Thucydides or Livy, but they also gave themselves to more or less free reconstruction of the popular tradition. Their peculiar character makes on the unprejudiced mind the clear impression that they are not history but saga."

In commenting upon an imposing array of such statements from the leaders of the Higher Criticism, Professor Osgood wisely says, *"It is not possible on any theory to avoid the real issue. If the Higher Criticism is true, Christ was the greatest of false prophets and deceivers. If Christ taught God's truth, this criticism is absolutely false."*

guide. We would surely turn from him to the guidance of these Wiser Men.

(3) Let us further mark how Christ adventured his entire work on the truth and trustworthiness of Scripture. At the very outset of his ministry he went into the synagogue at Nazareth and opened the scroll of Isaiah at the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." And, having read this passage, he said to his audience, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

If we follow him through the three eventful years of his ministry we shall find him again and again, in the same manner, hypothecating the truth of his teaching and the genuineness of his work on the sanction of Holy Writ.

After his resurrection, while walking with certain of his disciples along the way to Emmaus, he "began with Moses and opened the whole Scriptures concerning himself." It would be interesting to know the substance of that expository sermon. We may be quite sure that he unfolded the meaning of ancient rites and symbols, as well as of Messianic prediction, in the light of things which had recently happened at Jerusalem. We may be equally sure that he carefully

avoided any suggestion of the "fact" that "the great body of Messianic prediction has not only never been fulfilled but cannot now be fulfilled for the reason that its own time has passed forever." What he did say seems to have been of contrary import. It was directly in line with his previous utterance, "Not one jot or tittle shall pass away until all be fulfilled. Thus it is written and thus it must be."

So Christ planted himself on the absolute truth of Scripture and adventured the integrity of his work upon it. And it is respectfully submitted that what was good enough for our Lord and Master ought to be sufficient for those who profess to follow him. He stood as a constant witness to the unqualified truth of the Scriptures, ever turning to them as a Court of Final Appeal in verification of his divine nature and mediatorial work; saying, "Search them; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

I do not see, therefore, how it is possible to detach the Written from the Incarnate Word. They stand together. They are unreservedly loyal to each other. How could it be otherwise when they are both revelations of the same God?

Attention is now called to *a striking parallel* between the two Words in the following particulars:

First: Christ as the Incarnate Word and the Scriptures as the Written Word are both alike called "The Truth" and "The Word of God."

Second: They are both theanthropic: that is, divinely conceived and humanly born. As such the divine and human are inseparably blended in them. Christ was

conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary; but in partaking of his mother's humanity he in no wise inherited her sin. In like manner the Scriptures were written by certain men as they were moved by the Spirit of God; and in this case also it is claimed that the divine-human product was free from human imperfection. The features of Jesus doubtless bore a distinct likeness to those of his mother; just as the pages of Holy Writ are marked by the mental characteristics of their human penmen; but in neither case does this resemblance prevent that absolute faultlessness which belongs to any Word of God.

Third: it is only in the original that either the Incarnate or Written Word can be called "inerrant." We have heard the Higher Critics saying, "What is the use of affirming inerrancy of an 'original autograph' which is not in existence? The theory that there were no errors in the original text is sheer assumption, upon which no mind can rest with certainty. We must take the Scriptures as we have them, without reference to a hypothetical original which no living man has seen." It is a poor rule, however, which cannot be made to work both ways. No living man has ever seen the Incarnate Word. There is no accurate portrait of him in existence,—certainly not if the Scriptures are unreliable. Every version of Christ which is produced in the life and character of Christians is full of imperfections. Nevertheless we do believe that the original Christ, who for a brief period of thirty years lived among men and then vanished from sight, was "holy, harmless and undefiled;" precisely

as it is claimed the Scriptures were in their original form.

Fourth: Notwithstanding all errors in transmission, the Word in both cases remains in such substantial perfection as to be effective for the accomplishment of its purpose. A special providence has kept before the eyes of all generations the image of an immaculate Christ. A like special providence has so guarded the transcription of the Written Word that we may confidently hold it to be an infallible rule of faith and practice. Neither the Incarnate nor the Written Word, as we have them, can lead a soul astray, but will infallibly conduct the believer at last to heaven's gate.

To recapitulate: Our Lord believed the Bible; spoke of it as "truth" and as "the Word of God"; preached it; practiced it: adventured the integrity and success of his redemptive work upon its veracity; stood particularly for its record of creation, of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, of Jonah's adventures on the way to Nineveh and of such other portions as are most frequently called in question; commissioned his disciples to preach the Bible to the uttermost parts of the earth, thus making it the determining factor in the problem of his kingdom; and never uttered a single word or syllable to indicate that he supposed it to be otherwise than true from beginning to end.

How shall we account for his consistent loyalty to the Book? And how shall we explain that eloquent silence of his with respect to its alleged errors? We face a threefold alternative. *First,* there were no

such errors in Scripture. *Second,* the errors were there but Christ was not aware of them. *Third,* he was aware of them but did not choose to tell.

In the first case the Scriptures must of course be regarded as true. In the second case, if Christ was not aware of the alleged errors, then the destructive critic of our time is wiser than he and therefore more worthy to be our spiritual guide. In the third case, if he knew there were such errors in Scripture and did not tell, he was not an honest man.

XIV

EXCURSUS

JESUS: HIS BOOK

AS I entered the Synagogue a Man had just risen to read the Lesson of the Day. It was obvious that he, though clad in homespun, was no common man; and, by his reverent handling of the Book, it seemed that he regarded it as no common book.

The Lesson was from one of the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Having read thus far he closed the Book and began to say, "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears." In the discourse which followed he advanced the stupendous claim that he, this Man in homespun, was the long-looked-for Messiah, "whom kings and prophets longed to see and died without the sight." As he proceeded, the eyes of all that were in the Synagogue were fastened upon him. But the claim and the Claimant were so amazingly at odds that murmurings began to be heard, "Is not this the car-

penter's son?" and presently they rose up with one consent and thrust him out.

I followed and, on joining him, asked, "Who art thou?" He answered, "I am the only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father before the world was. I am Immanuel; that is, God dwelling among men. I am he of whom it is written 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'"

Then I asked, "What is the Book?"

He answered, "This also is the Word of God; search it: for therein thou shalt find eternal life, because it testifieth of me."

But, not knowing the credentials of the Book, I continued, "How may I be assured that this is the veritable Word of God?"

Whereupon he said, "By its fruits thou shalt know it. Come with me down the centuries, and I will show thee what this Book has done, is doing and can do."

We presently came to the door of a humble Home, at which he knocked; and on being admitted he raised his hands in benediction saying, "Peace be within this house!"

On a table in the centre of the living-room lay the Book, from which the goodman of the house had been reading, with his family gathered about him. By the light in their eyes I knew that this was a Christian home, where husband and wife were bound by an indissoluble tie and the children were knit together by filial love.

As I looked inquiringly toward my Guide he said,

"All homes are thus happy when governed by the principles which are written in the Book."

"But is there no sorrow here?"

"Oh, yes; once and again the shadow of death has crossed the threshold; but the Book gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. The members of the household do not sorrow as those that are without hope: there is a rainbow in every tear, for when they say, 'Farewell' they only mean, 'Until we meet again.'"

And I said within myself, "Surely a Book that radiates such happiness must have come from God."

He then brought me to a Workshop. As we entered I saw men toiling at the bench. Some of them were indolent, some slighted their tasks, and some spoke angrily of other workmen and conspired against their employers. These were embittered and discontented with their lot. But there were others who applied themselves industriously to the business in hand, thinking of labour less as drudgery than of serving others in doing their bit.

I asked of my companion, "What makes the difference?"

He replied, "The principles which are written in the Book. For therein is the primal law, 'Thou shalt eat thy bread by the sweat of thy brow'; and there also is written the Golden Rule, 'Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them.'"

And again I said within myself, "A Book that teaches us to live and let live, to be industrious and

content, and to regard the welfare of others while making the most of ourselves, is worthy of the mind of God."

He led me from the Workshop to an Exchange, where capitalists were dealing in bonds and mortgages and planning great enterprises. Here also I perceived a difference. Some of them had worshipped the yellow god so long that they had grown yellow with the jaundice of gold. They were sons of the horseleech, with hands like outstretched talons and fevered lips crying, "Give! Give!" They were money-sharks, miserly, extortionate, grinding the faces of the poor, shrewd bargainers, usurers, ambidextrous over-reachers. They were dying of "the sacred hunger of gold" and knew it not. But others there were, equally rich and enterprising yet open-handed, magnanimous and ever "ready to communicate." They believed in fair-dealing and consented that the labourer is worthy of his hire. For them wealth had no value except for what it could do: and the best it could do was to make its possessor rich toward God. In the use of their wealth they regarded themselves as stewards, holding all in trust and at the divine call.

"Is this," I asked, "the teaching of the Book?"

He answered, "It is: the treasure that lies buried in the bosom of the everlasting hills is the Lord's: and whatever he has committed to these stewards is a solemn trust, to be used for the advancement of his kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth and in doing good as they have opportunity unto all men."

And again I reflected that the presumption is in

favour of the superhuman origin of a Book with such an influence among the children of men.

We then visited an Institution of Learning, where many students were bending over their books; books of art and science and philosophy. I knew that these men were seekers after truth; but would they find it? Some were pursuing the knowledge of earthly things as an end in itself and not as a means to an end; and by their knit brows they were finding "much study a weariness to the flesh." By these the Book of all books was neglected; and with all their wisdom they knew not God. Others, while knowing the value of all truth, searched the one Book for a solution of the great problems in which are involved the issues of eternal life. These put the emphasis on character and usefulness and immortality; and they seemed to be living in the hope of living forever. For them, time was a school of preparation for eternity and death the great Commencement.

"It is a wonderful Book," said I to myself, "that can thus overarch life with promise and lofty hope and aspiration." And a voice beside me seemed to be saying:

> "This is the lamp whose steady light
> Guides the lone traveller in the night.
> 'Tis God's own Word! Its beaming ray
> Can turn a midnight into day."

My Guide said, "We will now visit a Hospital"; but even as he spoke the skies were overcast and the earth began to rumble with the footfall of armies. Kings and rulers could be heard taking counsel together

and saying, "Let us break God's bands asunder and cast his cords away from us!"

My faith began to shake and tremble; whereupon a voice beside me said, "Listen!" and lo, above the roar of cannon and clash of steel I heard a burst of laughter out of heaven! "It is God," he said, "laughing at the folly of the Great Powers who conspire against him. Behold how he has them in derision! For the decree has gone forth, 'Thou art my Son; to thee will I give the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' Thus it is written and thus it shall be; but alas, for the sorrows by the way!"

As we approached the Hospital I saw over its gateway the words *Hotel Dieu.* Ambulances came rolling up with wounded and dying men, and on every ambulance was the symbol of the Cross. We entered and walked through the wards of the Hospital; and again I saw upon the arms of the nurses who ministered to the wounded the symbol of the Cross. I asked the meaning of it.

The Man beside me said, "This is the Spirit of the Gospel, which is written in the Book. The Red Cross stands for self-sacrifice in the behalf of others."

On one of the cots lay a soldier facing the great mystery of death; but he was unafraid. By his side lay the Book and, as he passed on, he murmured, "I will fear no evil: thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Then said I to myself, "This is a wonderful Book, to live by and to die by."

As we still journeyed we came to a Church and entered it. The service having been opened with

prayer a lesson was read from the Book and the congregation sang, "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love."

I asked my Guide if all in this assembly were saints.

"By no means," he answered, "There is not a saint among them. They are all sinners, but sinners saved by grace. They are reaching forth and pressing on, not without much stumbling, toward the prize of the high-calling of God. Meanwhile their business is to co-operate with the King in setting up his Kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth."

"The wheels of the royal Chariot," he continued, "move all too slowly, by reason of the half-heartedness of the King's subjects; but in the fulness of time he that shall come will come and will make no tarrying; and on that day every knee shall bow before him."

On a Map suspended over the pulpit I observed a red line, drawn around a third portion of the world. "The part thus enclosed," said my Companion, "is called 'Christendom,' because the glory of the Book has fallen over it. Within that charmed circle are included all the light and humanity and civilization of the world. Beyond it lie darkness and the shadow of death."

How is it," I inquired, "that Christians have not carried the Book to those regions beyond?"

"They have been so unmindful of their commission," was his answer, "that after the lapse of nineteen centuries there are still twelve hundred millions of people who have never seen the Book or heard its Good News. Meanwhile, vain is their prayer, 'Thy Kingdom

come'; for the Gospel must first be proclaimed throughout the whole world; then shall the end be."

We next entered a great Assembly Hall. Above the chair of the presiding officer were the words, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." A man was on his feet presenting a Report which concluded with these words, "Resolved, that there is no God." The Report was adopted with one consent. The streets were straightway filled with a surging mob who echoed the cry, "There is no God!" On their shoulders they carried a courtesan to Notre Dame, where she was enshrined above the high altar as the Goddess of Reason. The Terror had begun! There were tumbrils hastening with victims to the guillotine. The gutters were running red. The new-born Republic was tottering to its fall!

Then in a moment we seemed to be transported to another Legislative Hall. On a bell above the doorway was inscribed the legend, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof." As we entered a venerable man was invoking the blessing of God. On the desk of the presiding officer lay the Book, which was to furnish forth the laws and jurisprudence of this Republic.

I asked, "What will be the outcome? Will the Republic last?"

His answer was, "So long as its people are true to its landmarks." And as we came away there was an Anthem full of promise sounding through the air:

"Our fathers' God to thee,
Author of Liberty,
To thee we sing!

Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King."

Thereupon I found myself praying that our country, founded in the principles of right and justice which are written in the Book, might ever be loyal to it.

We were now in the open street. Men hurrying by in the mad pursuit of wealth and pleasure seemed quite unmindful of the great verities of the spiritual life. There were some who who even railed at the Book and profaned the name of God. At this I marvelled, and would have questioned my Friend about it; but even as I turned he said, "Farewell," and, placing his Book in my hand, vanished from my sight.

I opened the Book; on its initial page was written, "Jesus: his Book," and on the next, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me."

Finding where the Red Trail began I read on and on, following it as one who follows a Guide with bleeding feet, until I seemed to stand before a great gate whereon was written this benison, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all: Amen."

And recalling the way I had come with my wonderful Guide, and the wonderful things I had seen along the way, I found myself saying, "The Book that makes happy homes, contented workmen and capitalists rich toward God, scholars wise in the problems of eternal life, institutions of mercy, governments founded on the principles of mutual justice, and

churches whose spires are like index fingers pointing to a holy and happy heaven, is surely the Word of God."

Then, turning once more to the inscription, "Jesus: his Book," and remembering how he knew and loved it, preached and practiced it, commended it to his followers and never mentioned it except in terms of highest praise, I held it reverently next my heart and said, "The Book that was good enough for my Lord and Saviour is good enough for me."

XV

IT IS THE CHURCH'S BOOK

IN Paul's letter to the Christians of Ephesus he speaks of the Church as being "built upon the Apostles and the Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

A few years ago, the engineers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, by sinking shafts and opening galleries along the walls of the temple, came upon its original foundations. They were seventy feet below the surface, resting on the rocky slopes of Moriah. At the lowest angle of this temple area they discovered the corner-stone. It was four feet thick and fourteen broad; and the fine original finish of its surface was almost unimpaired. It is not improbable that the prophet Isaiah had this very stone in mind when he uttered the Messianic prediction, "Behold, I lay for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone."

It thus appears that the most important place in the church, deepest down, and most rudimental, is reserved for Christ. The "rock" to which Christ referred, when he said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church," was not Peter but Peter's good confession, "Thou art Christ, the Son

of the living God." If this be questioned let Peter himself be heard: "Ye, also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is contained in the Scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.' Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient 'the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,' and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the Word, being disobedient." (I Peter 2:1-9: Cf. Acts 4:8-12.)

(1) But if Christ is the chief corner-stone of the Church, the Bible is its foundation. Paul says, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets," this being a common and well understood phrase used to designate the Scriptures in those days.

I wonder whether the destructive critics who are engaged in undermining the popular faith in Scripture are aware what they are doing? "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" The only Christ we have is the Christ who is revealed nowhere else but in the Scriptures. To impair their credibility, is to impugn the only historical witnesses that bear testimony to our religion. Some of these destroyers are among the professed followers of Christ; but surely they do not follow him in this; for, as we have seen, he never uttered a word in contravention of the plenary truth of the Bible but on the contrary was ever ready to vindicate and uphold it.

But how do the Scriptures serve as the foundation of the Church? In furnishing all that is necessary for its organization and effectiveness every way. Herbert Spencer says that two things are necessary in order to a working Church, namely, creed and cultus.

The Scriptures furnish the creed or system of truth; they also furnish the cultus, or mode of worship. The latter, as given by inspiration, is intensely simple. The beauty of holiness is the service of the heart; its form being relatively of slight import. To ask, "When I offer my prayers, shall I sit or kneel or stand upon my feet?" is precisely like the question asked of Sir Thomas More by his executioner: "Sir, does your head lie right upon the block?" to whom he answered, "It matters naught about my head so that my heart be right." Let us abide by Scripture in this matter, avoiding all unnecessary form and ceremony which is but "superfluity of naughtiness." For whatsoever is not of faith is of sin.

But something more than creed and cultus is needed in the making of a Church. For one thing we must have a perfect Code of Morals. And this we find in the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount, *plus* the personal example of Jesus as the Ideal Man.

We need also a program of life, or a plan of campaign, if you will; and this also is clearly marked out in the Scriptures. What is the business of those who belong to the Church? It is to seek "first of all the kingdom of God and his righteousness." As we walk along the street we mingle with two classes of people, who look alike but are really separated by an im-

measurable gulf. On the one hand, there are some who are wholly absorbed in the pursuit of wealth, pleasure or other personal emolument; who neither know nor apparently care to know anything beyond the things of this present life; who, "forever hastening to the grave, stoop downward as they run." On the other hand there are not a few who believe in the coming of the King and mean to do all in their power to hasten it. They, also, are engaged in bread-and-butter-work; but the things of the kingdom are supreme, and their prime purpose is to hasten its coming on earth and in the lives of men.

(2) The Church is not only founded on the Scriptures but is their depository, holding them in trust for safeguarding and world-wide dissemination.

In one of Paul's letters—already referred to—he enjoins Timothy, his successor in the pastorate of the Ephesian Church, to "guard that good thing which was committed unto him, through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us."

The reference is distinctly to the *paratheke* or body of Revelation which had been "once for all delivered to the saints." Wherefore the Church is characterized as "the pillar and ground of truth." The word "Church," or *ekklesia,* means "called out." The Church is a body of men called out of the world for the specific purpose of preserving and utilizing this deposit of Scriptural truth until the whole world shall became acquainted with it.

The original germ or nucleus of Scripture was the Moral Law, together with the Civil and Ceremonial Law which complemented it. God's jealousy for the

maintenance of his Word is shown by his command to the Levites: "Take this Book of the Law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of Jehovah your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." In the course of time there was added to this original nucleus a further set of revelations, known as "The New Testament"; and these together with the foregoing constitute the Oracles as they are committed to us.

The Jews were set apart as a Church or "chosen people" for the express purpose of keeping their Oracles unimpaired and passing them on to the coming ages. In the course of Paul's great argument on Justification by Faith, where he shows that Jewish rites and ceremonies had no power to save, this objection is interposed, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" to which he answers, "Much every way; first of all that they were entrusted with the Oracles of God." This then was the singular privilege and prerogative of the Jews; they were "chosen" to be custodians of the Word. Alas, they proved false to their trust! They rejected their Oracles and crucified "the Hope of Israel." Wherefore, "their candlestick was removed out of its place"; so that every wandering Jew in the world to-day is a living monument of the divine jealousy for the Scriptures as the palladium of revealed truth.

The Christian Church, as lineal successor of the Jewish Church, has a like mission. To it are entrusted the Oracles for safe keeping, for exposition and for propagation to the uttermost parts of the earth. This trust is expressed in "Missions." To save souls is a

divine prerogative; but to disseminate truth, the Gospel of The Oracles through which souls are saved, is the distinct business of the Church. When that is attended to God promises to do the rest. A clear understanding of this fact with a corresponding zeal in Missions would speedily bring in the Golden Age. When Christ was asked by his disciples for a sign of his second coming, he answered, "The end is not yet. The Gospel must first be preached to all nations: then shall the end be."

The body of truth thus deposited with the Church has been placed in the special care of its ministers.

In the Jewish Church the prophets were charged with the special duty of safeguarding the oracles and teaching them. In process of time there arose within their number a new order known as Scribes, that is, transcribers of Scripture. They were the Biblical experts of those days, who assumed to be able rightly to divide the word of truth. It was not long, however, before they began to take undue liberties with the Word; for which our Lord denounced them, saying, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your tradition." And again, "Woe unto you, mask-wearers! Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter. Woe unto you, blind guides, that strain out the gnat and swallow the camel! Ye serpents, ye off-spring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?" All this because they were false to their Oracles, adding to and subtracting from them, overlaying them with their traditions and thus set-

ting at naught their commission to safeguard and disseminate them.

The call to the Christian ministry is a divine call. It is a summons to the sacred trust of protecting, defending and disseminating the truth as contained in the Oracles; and fidelity to that commission is solemnly pledged in its ordination vows.

In the early Church there were ministers who were recreant to their trust. Paul was moved to warn Timothy against such false teachers as "creep in" among the people to make shipwreck of faith. He warned the young pastor of Ephesus against their specious inroads and with pathetic earnestness enjoined him to be faithful; "O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee!"

Are there such false teachers among us? It is an open secret that not a few have insinuated themselves into evangelical pulpits where they, sometimes brazenly but more often with covert cleverness, not only undermine the written Word but deny the Incarnate Word. What care they for ordination vows? Honesty and veracity are cast to the winds. "Oaths are but straws!"

What is the result? The question is frequently asked, "Why are there so few candidates for the ministry?" The wonder is that there should be any candidates at all when there are so many ministers and theological instructors who reduce the Gospel to *nil*. Why should a young man consecrate his life to preaching when there is nothing to preach? In Germany, where the pulpits are largely given over to rationalism, the supply of candidates is less than one-

third what it was fifty years ago. In our own country there is a smaller but still lamentable falling off. Why? Inquire at the doors of Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Cornell and other great institutions of learning, notably our State Universities, where rationalistic science and philosophy—usually not only "made" but worn out "in Germany"—are taught in direct contravention of the Scriptures. Is it to be expected that young men will be moved by such instruction to devote their lives to a profession which is solemnly pledged to the teaching of propositions which they must not believe in?

A further result is the breaking up of the foundations of common morality. Faith and conduct go together. One who is more liberal than the doctrine of Christ must needs be broader than the Moral Law. It would not be just to say that all "liberals" are on the wrong side of all current questions of reform; but it is quite within bounds to say that ministers and laymen who stand by the evangelical faith can always be depended on to support the sanctions of the Sabbath, temperance, the marriage relation, and every other proposition which concerns the welfare of society. When the question of opening our saloons on Sunday was pending recently in our Legislature, the State of New York was ransacked to find ministers who would advocate it. A few were found—eleven to be exact—and naturally all "liberal." There was not one among them who stood for the integrity of the Written and Incarnate Word of God.

It is worth while for those who thoughtlessly declaim against creeds and clamour for ethical sermons

to remember that truth and morality walk hand in hand. There is no sound and dependable morality which does not find its base in obedience to revealed truth. To abandon that truth, as a whole or in any essential part, is to loosen the sanctions of right and righteousness; for "as a man thinketh within himself so is he."

(3) But this is not all. The Church is not only founded on the Scriptures and put in charge over them as a solemn trust, but as already intimated it is enjoined to promulgate them to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Command is, "Preach the Word." The Church, we repeat, is not expected to regenerate men: God himself does that; but every member of the Church is, up to the full measure of his influence, charged with the responsibility of carrying the inspired Book with its glad tidings to the regions beyond until it has reached the last man.

It is because the Church has been culpably slow in realizing this responsibility that the coming of Christ has been postponed so long. Sporadic efforts have been made to bring the nations to a saving knowledge of religion in other ways; but God's way is the only way. The Spirit works through the Word for the salvation of men. Wherefore, preach the Word! When that is done we can safely and hopefully leave the result with God.

XVI

IT IS EVERYBODY'S BOOK

ONE of the most convincing arguments for the divine origin of the Scriptures is their singular adaptation to the needs of all sorts and conditions of men.

Here is a Book for young and old, for rich and poor, for lofty and lowly, for wise and unwise, for all who feel the burden of sin and the need of One who hath power on earth to forgive sin, for all who realize the cramping limitations of this present life and long for an outlook into life further on, for all and several of every tribe and nation of the children of men.*

There is no point in human experience where this Book does not touch us. In pain, sorrow, poverty, discouragement, loneliness and in the article of

*It is greatly to be regretted that the English-speaking world has no approved version of the Scriptures in the current vernacular. The King James Version is not in the language of our time but in that of three hundred years ago, and none of the authorized revisions has brought it up to date. A foolish reverence for the dignified phraseology of the Westminster divines has left some hundreds of millions of people without a Bible in the current tongue: and, in view of the fact that Christ himself spoke to the people in the language of their daily life, this is without excuse.

death it lends a hand to uplift and support us. Wherever we are, whatever we do, however we suffer, as Coleridge said, "The Bible finds us."

This is due, in large measure, to the fact that it reduces to their simplest terms all the profound problems which it undertakes to solve. And it does this by scrupulously avoiding the terminology of the schools and appealing directly to common-sense.

I. Take, for example, the doctrine of the Atonement. What labyrinths of argumentation have been constructed about this vital truth! Listen to the objections: "Is it to be supposed that God would scourge his only-begotten Son?" "Can the innocent suffer for the guilty?" "Is there any expiatory value in suffering and death?"

Ask the child at your knee to answer these objections; for, indeed, the argument must ultimately be solved by the intuition of innocency; as it is written, "Except ye become as this little child ye shall in no wise enter the Kingdom of God."

"Will the Father scourge his beloved Son?" Surely not unless some commensurate end requires it: nor unless the Son himself, in view of that high purpose, should with a glad heart consent to it. But listen to his words: "Lo, I come! In the volume of the Book it is written, 'I rejoice to do thy will.'"

"Can the innocent suffer for the guilty?" What a question! The innocent are all the while and everywhere suffering for the guilty; kings for their rebellious subjects, parents for their wayward children; everybody for his sinning forbears. Nor is

there anything finer in human nature than the voluntary suffering of one for another; that is, sympathy, which Webster defines as "the quality of being affected by the affection of another." If it be true that we are by nature the children of God; what sort of a God would he be who did not suffer vicariously for us? By this token the highest note in the history of humanity is struck at Calvary. Here is the supreme expression of divine love. It is just like God. It is just what we should expect of him.

"Is there any expiatory value in suffering and death?" That depends. It must not be overlooked that there is a Covenant to be reckoned with in these premises; and to that Covenant there are three parties, namely, God the Father, the only-begotten Son and the sinner, that is, myself. If the Father be willing to send his Son; if the Son be willing to suffer in my behalf; and if I, "the party of the third part," be willing by an obedient and appropriating faith to have it so, where in all the universe is there any who, without impertinence, can object to it?

Such is the simple logic of Grace as the Bible teaches it. Alas, that in the process of the years we are so prone to drift away from the wisdom that was in the mind of Jesus when he said, "Except ye become as little children."

"Tell me the story simply, as to a little child,
For I am weak, and weary, and helpless and defiled;
Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon!
The early dew of morning has passed away at noon."

II. Or take the doctrine of Justification by Faith, which Luther called "the article of a standing or a

falling church." It is easy to propound such questions as, "If Christ died for all, then what need of believing in him?" or, "What saving virtue can reside in faith?"

Ask these questions of the schoolmen and they will lead you into philosophic labyrinths of confusion worse confounded: but go to the Oracles and, like children in a kindergarten, you will be answered by picturesque figures of speech, such as these:

The ground is covered with manna, "white and plenteous as hoar frost." Whosoever will may satisfy his hunger by eating it. But eat he must or famish for want of it. And Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die. And except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man ye have no life in you."

The water is gushing from the rock at Rephidim. Whosoever will may drink and live! But, though the stream at Rephidim were as broad and deep as the Amazon, a man, refusing to drink would perish of thirst. And Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but it shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life.'

Thus the faith that justifies is represented as a simple appropriation of the benefits of divine grace. It is a glad hand stretched out to take the gift of God. Could any requirement be more reasonable? But we entangle our feet in elaborate sophisms which prevent our running up the heavenly way.

Note bene: all that the Scriptures require for our

personal salvation is that we shall accept Christ as our Saviour and prove our sincerity by living accordingly. "Only believe!" "By-lifian" is the thing we live by. Christ on his Cross saves nobody. It is only when Christ crucified is received by faith as "*my* Lord, *my* life, *my* sacrifice, *my* Saviour and *my* all," that I am saved through him. This is not philosophy; it is common-sense; and wise men do not hesitate to act upon it.

If we would ever arrive at a solution of these or any other of the great problems of the spiritual life it must be along Scriptural lines; not by following blind leaders of the blind in vain excursions into the bewildering mazes of "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," but by pursuing the plain and simple paths marked out for us.

Much of our education is like arboriculture in Japan. An oak tree is taken from its place on the hill top where, buffeting the storms, it fastens its roots upon the everlasting rocks and lifts its arms triumphant in the air; and it is reduced by elaborate cultivation to the small dimensions of a plant in a pot. In like manner, as to our attitude toward the great spiritual facts, we move further and further, by a process of mental dwarfing, from the clear and simple light of Scripture into a narrow and hidebound scholasticism which makes us unconsciously but disastrously averse to truth.

It was thus with Nicodemus, to whom Christ presented facts which should have commended themselves to him at once; but, being a rabbi educated in

hair-splitting schools of philosophy, he must needs cry, "How can these things be?"

It has pleased God to give us the Scriptures for our guidance on the pathway of life. They are,—as we should expect of a divine chart,—so plain that a wayfaring man, however foolish, need not err therein. If more were needed we have it in the vouchsafed aid of the Holy Spirit of whom it is written, "He will lead you into all truth."

But all guidance is vain for those who refuse to follow it. Not even common-sense, in these premises, that is to say, the universal instinct of the race with reference to spiritual things, is adequate for perfect guidance to such as, by wilful and habitual wrong-thinking, have been diverted from the King's Highway: for so it is written, "Ye shall know the truth if ye follow on to know it."

In the interpretation of the divine Word common-sense *plus* the illumination of the Spirit affords all necessary help. "The light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world" is like a lantern in our hands. If we prefer, we may pursue our journey along the dark and perilous ways of life, so absorbed in discussing the qualities of the caloric and actinic rays as to stumble into no end of pitfalls; but if we are willing to follow the guidance of the Book, with the aid of the divine Spirit, who both illuminates its pages and anoints our eyes with eyesalve that we may see, we shall find the light not only sufficient for each passing hour but growing brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

XVII

ITS SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE

SO much has already been said about the doctrinal truths of Scripture that this chapter is likely to be brief. There are, however, some additional facts that call for emphasis, by reason of their contributary value in an argument like this for the divine origin of the Book.

(1) One of these is *the comprehensiveness* of its doctrinal system.

It would be difficult, indeed impossible, to suggest a single problem in the entire province of religious thought which does not find a satisfactory solution here. And this—considering the antiquity of the Book, its limited proportions and the vast diversity of its readers—is a remarkable fact. If this Book be only "literature" where in all the literature of the world is there another like it? We find herein an answer to all questions as to God and immortality, the life here and the life farther on.

(2) Another fact worthy of note is that the emphasis which the Scriptures lay upon these spiritual truths is measured precisely by their relative value in practical life.

For example, the personality of God, together with all those attributes which must combine to form the

perfect symmetry of a divine character, is so constantly iterated and reiterated as to leave no room for the faintest shadow of doubt concerning it.

The same is true of the doctrine of sin, which is always yoked up with retribution which, unless divinely averted, is sure to follow it.

A like emphasis is put upon the doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ, and of Sanctification through the Word by the power of the Spirit. These are not only vital but eminently practical truths, inasmuch as the issues of life and immortality are wrapped up in them.

It is sometimes affirmed that Immortality is not taught in the Scriptures. This, if true, would show a fundamental defect; but it may fairly be said that no other doctrine is more clearly inculcated. It is not only explicitly taught but—which is more significant—it is assumed as the very postulate of all spiritual truth. If death ends all then the Bible is of less consequence to me, or to any other thoughtful man, than a Treatise on Wholesome Foods. In that case Epicurus was right: "Let us eat and drink: for to-morrow we die." But the man whom we meet at the very doorway of the Scriptures has God's breath in his nostrils and is therefore as immortal as God himself. For what can quench this spark of infinite fire? A man created in the divine likeness cannot die as a beast dieth. He lives forever! So runs the postulate. What need of laboured argument to prove it? As well ask Euclid to postpone his excursion in the higher mathematics until he has demonstrated the axioms; or a Professor of Applied Dynamics to

turn aside from his curriculum to prove the existence of force. Wise men waste no time in philosophizing about self-evident facts. Like the writers of Scripture they assume them and pass on.

But while the more vital doctrines of the inspired Book are deeply emphasized, the non-essential or less important are more lightly dwelt on; not indeed so lightly as to give the impression that any truth is negligible, but only so as to throw the more significant truths into bolder relief. Thus room is left, even in the Lord's household, for a difference of opinion as to certain verities which, while revealed, are not explained, because they belong to God.

Such, for example, are "fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute." Here Calvinists and Arminians may agree to differ, because a full understanding of the divine decrees is not necessary to salvation. So, also, the denominations may excusably be at odds with reference to ecclesiastical forms and polities: since, important as these may appear, they are not fundamental in the building of life and character. The significant fact is that a sufficient answer is given in the Scriptures to all questions, whether essential or non-essential, which have any bearing whatsoever on life here and hereafter.

(3) Another fact in this connection has already been referred to; namely, the universal adaptation of Scriptural truth. In one of Augustine's Sermons he remarks that "the Scriptures are so deep that an elephant can drown in them and shallow enough to be forded by a lamb." The problems considered are,

indeed, profound; but their solution is adjusted to the capacity of all sorts of men.

Contrast, for example, the Scriptural teaching as to the being and nature of God with the scholastic method of clarifying the same truth. The students in our Theological Seminaries are drilled in the Ontological, Cosmological and Teleological modes of demonstrating that the world is not a fortuitous concourse of atoms but a creation with a Creator behind it. Open the Book and straightway the whole argument confronts you; "In the beginning God!" If the Bible had been made for theologians it, too, might have dealt in sesquipedalian phrases; but this is the universal highway, and no such polysyllabic terms as "Ontological," "Cosmological" or "Teleological" shall be found there. The King's Road was not made for philosophers but for wayfaring men.

The Bible does not attempt even a formal definition of God. This was left for the Assembly of Westminster Divines, who, summoning their highest wisdom, produced this splendid labyrinth of words; "God is a spirit (What is Spirit?) infinite (What is infinite?) eternal (What is eternity?) unchangeable (Think of unchangeableness, if you can!) in his being (As to 'being' let Herbert Spencer speak, 'Life is a definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external co-existences and sequences!') wisdom (Who can comprehend omniscience?) power (Will you measure omnipotence with a yard stick?) holiness (The white solar ray!), justice (Let Shylock and Portia cross lances here!) goodness ('As far

as the East is from the West!') and truth." (Here Pilate speaks for all the schools, "What *is* truth?"). Thus the most reverent attempt to define the great Mystery ends in a succession of teratologies. Now open the Book and hear the words of the Great Teacher, "When ye pray say, Our Father." Enough! God is defined. The plummet of philosophy can sound no deeper depths: the dreams of prophecy can reach no loftier heights: and a little child can understand it.

(4) It remains to consider the important fact that the Bible alone, of all the so-called Sacred Books of the world and of the centuries, so presents the multifarious truths of religion that they can be arranged in a coherent system.

Who ever heard of the doctrinal system of the Koran or of the Zendavesta or of the Analects of Confucius? There is no claim of consistency here; but consistency is the crown-jewel of the Scriptures. the œcumenical creeds of Christendom are the logical expression of our Scriptural faith. The many divisions of the Evangelical Church—however far apart they may be in minor points of order—are all agreed as to these formularies. A heretic in one of these denominations is a heretic in all. To deny that God is holy, that man is a sinner, or that the only at-one-ment is wrought by the God-man, is to be an Ishmaelite among all the tribes. The vital truths are thus recognized as a system, whose doctrines hold together like the links of an anchor-chain. Break one link and your ship is adrift. For this reason a man's safety lies not in accepting so much of Scripture as

may please him, but in adhering to the whole "without sciscitation." For its truths go together, as if intended to be, in George Herbert's words, "a necklace of pearls for the adornment of the bride of God."

XVIII

ITS MORAL CODE

THE average man is inclined to do right; but obviously he must have a reliable rule to live by. Where shall he find it?

Can tradition afford such a rule? Is it enough for one to do as his fathers were accustomed to do? On the contrary, the law of heredity, when applied in the sphere of ethics, is a ball and chain rather than a door opening into life. There is many an inebriate who justifies his loss of self-respect on the ground that a strain of alcoholism runs in his veins. But if he would remove his father's decanter from his own sideboard and put up a brave fight for the recovery of his manhood with a firm reliance on divine help he would surely win out. The sour grapes which our forebears have eaten can not relieve us of personal responsibility. Every man must answer for himself before God.

Is it safe, then, to follow fashion? Shall we do as others do; attend church because church-going is popular or run with the multitude to do evil, as the case may be? Fashion is a fallacious guide at best, since it changes with shifting time and circumstance. There are some portions of Switzerland where goitres are so much in vogue that a man who has not such an excrescence is called "goose-necked." One is sure

to go wrong who merely follows the precept, "When you are in Paris, do as Parisians do."

Or shall we follow conscience? If we cannot find a standard by "comparing ourselves with ourselves," shall we look for it within ourselves? Nay; let no man boast of being "a conscientious man"; since conscience may be seared by sinful habit as with an hot iron. It may be twisted out of its normal direction as the magnetic needle is deflected by the iron in a ship's hull. Saul of Tarsus persecuted the Christians "in all good conscience." Philip the Second followed his conscience in expressing a desire to "ride up to the bridle in Protestant blood." It is not enough, therefore, to follow the inward voice.

Where, then, is the standard? Nowhere, unless God himself, the God of right and righteousness, shall reveal it. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not and it shall be given him." The answer to that asking is found in the Scriptures; and a clear understanding of the Scriptures is afforded by the Spirit of God. One of the official functions of the Holy Spirit is to regulate the conscience in that way.

The prime object of prayer is to arrive at that which the perverted and unaided conscience cannot give, to wit, a clear expression of the divine will. We are bound to do right, not merely what we believe to be right. We are bound to live as God in his Word enjoins us to live. It is not enough to say that our lives are adjusted to the requirements of conscience; they must be adjusted to the divine law as an enlightened conscience enables us to see it.

And this enlightenment is through the divine Word; precisely as a skipper corrects his compass by taking an observation of the stars. This Word, therefore, is ultimate, inasmuch as it is the medium through which God speaks to those who are cordially disposed to hear and obey him.

In the Ten Commandments, which were the original nucleus of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 25:31), we have a brief compendium of the Moral Law. The ancient Covenant with Israel, known as "the Covenant of Works," provided that whosoever kept that Law "should live by it"; but perfect obedience was required, in the necessity of the case, since "whosoever offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole law." One offense makes a man an outlaw; just as the deviation of a planet from its orbit by so much as a single inch makes it a wanderer in infinite space. Hence the need of a universal remedy for sin; inasmuch as "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

This remedy was provided under the Old Economy in the prophecy of Christ, which was known as "the Hope of Israel." No sooner had Adam sinned than he was pointed to Christ as "the Seed of woman" who should come in the fulness of time to "bruise the serpent's head." When Cain killed his brother he was informed that "the Sin-offering lay at his door." Thus the Saviour was revealed, and progressively revealed, in the prophecies of the Old Testament for the deliverance of ancient sinners; so that all who believed in the coming Christ might live by faith in him.

Then the day broke. The Messiah came; and with him another Covenant, which is characterized as "a new Covenant" by reason of the clearer emphasis which it puts upon the same Covenant of Grace which was originally made with Adam for all the children of men. The Seed of woman was at hand, with his face set steadfastly toward the Cross on which he was to bruise the serpent's head. In him behold "the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world."

He said that he had come not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it; i.e., to pay the ransom due to justice by bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. Thus he magnified the law while casting up an highway over which the lawbreaker might enter into life. Never was justice so vindicated as in the vicarious death of Christ, by which it is made manifest that God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, and through which a man can be just with God.

Nor was ever the Law so honoured as in his life and teaching. The Sermon on the Mount is his exposition of the Ten Commandments: and in that Sermon there is no mollifying of sin. As an exposé it burns like acid; it blisters like fire; it searches out the secret imaginations of the heart. It proclaims that the law is good, and that it must be kept even to the last jot and tittle of it. But if broken, what then? "Go, sell all that thou hast, and come and follow me!" Why follow him? Because he alone "hath power on earth to forgive sin."

In following him, we shall find him honouring the Law by reducing it to its simplest terms. The Ten

Commandments now become two: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength; this is the first and greatest Commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.*"

Out of these two commandments proceeds the Rule of Social Service. All right-thinking men and women are desirous of making this world a better place to live in. We hear the cry for help on every hand. How shall we answer it? What shall we do for the army of neer-do-weels; for the indolent and ignorant; for "the submerged tenth"; for God's poor and the devil's poor; for the sick and suffering, for widows and fatherless? Hear the bitter cry!

We get together in Sociological Conventions. We collect statistics, compare communities and measure ourselves among ourselves. We write about civic reform and prison reform and reforms without end. We build schools and hospitals and reformatories. We contribute for soup-kitchens, employment bureaus, art exhibits, entertainments, university settlements. So far, so good; but all this falls infinitely short of the requirements of the situation. Our measurement of the case is too narrow and superficial. We are treating man simply as an unfortunate animal for whom death ends all. We are estimating his needs by the cry of his appetites. He is hungry, let us feed him! He shivers, let us clothe him! He cannot distinguish between a chromo and a masterpiece of Raphael; wherefore let us cultivate

his æsthetic nature! Is man then no better than a sheep? Is he nothing more than a stomach and its appurtenances? Is the problem of his welfare to be solved by the argument of a full dinner-pail? Is physical comfort the sum total of happiness?

God be praised for all that is being done to alleviate the sufferings of the poor and destitute; but the Epicurean tendency of current sociological effort is greatly to be deplored. We blame the sickly sentimentalism of women who carry jellies and nose-gays to Murderers' Row; but what better is it to supply the present needs of the unfortunate while ignoring the profounder needs of their spiritual nature? Is this our boasted "progressivism?" Is it not rather a reversion to barbaric type? "Let us eat and drink," quoth Epicurus, "for to-morrow we die!"

But we do not die to-morrow; we live on and on through interminable to-morrows. Man is more than an animal; he is a child of God, created in the divine likeness and facing the blessed possibility of a divine heritage. His life here is only an handbreadth; so that however sore his present afflictions may be they "endure but for a moment"; while his life hereafter stretches on forever and ever.

We err, therefore, in measuring immortal needs by physical standards. We fall infinitely short of philanthropy in seeking to meet an eternal need by the betterment of temporal conditions. Man is indeed an animal; so far forth that when he hungers he must eat and when he shivers he must be clothed. But somehow in our beneficences we must get eternity into the reckoning. There is no true kind-

ness which does not see beyond the narrow horizons of the here and now: "for what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his life?"

Is there anywhere a perfect standard of such comprehensive humanity? Is there a satisfactory gauge by which we may measure our efforts to "do good as we have opportunity unto all men?" Is there a "good work" anywhere in history by which all other works may be measured?

Aye; open the Book and behold the Cross! Here is the ultimate standard of philanthropy. The Cross stands out in history as a divine announcement of the only effective plan for the deliverance of the whole man. It saves the soul by blotting out sin. On the one hand it disinfects memory by erasing the past; and on the other it glorifies hope by preparing the soul to meets its destiny. Thus it saves a man, body and soul, for time and eternity. For the man who finds salvation in Christ is put in the way of a holy endeavour to quit himself like a man. Bring him to Calvary, and you insure his temporal as well as his spiritual good. He is no longer content with base pursuits and companionships; the wastrel is ashamed of his profligacy and ambitious to live as an honest man among men. His whole life is revolutionized by a vital apprehension of the Gospel of Christ.

It is a small matter to feed one who is doomed to the gallows. Esau may be willing to trade his birthright for a mess of pottage but alas for the Jacob who becomes a party to it. An artist, desiring to paint a picture of The Prodigal's Return, engaged a beggar to sit as his model. The next day at the

appointed hour the man appeared dressed in his best. His appearance was improved; but he was actually more worthless than before, since he had unfitted himself even to serve as a model for the prodigal. It is proposed in some quarters by those who are engaged in philanthropic effort to treat all prodigals in this way; to furnish them with soap and water, a change of raiment and something to eat, and leave them in the far country. No! No! Let us get the wanderer well on his way to his Father's house, knowing that once there he shall have food and clothes in plenty, sitting at a well-filled table and wearing the best robe.

This is the method of the Scriptures, as illustrated by the philanthropic Christ. He healed the sick and alleviated the miseries of the poor and suffering; but these were mere by-products of his redemptive work. His face was set steadfastly toward the Cross; and on his way he consistently preached the higher life of reconciliation with God. Let the mind that was in Christ Jesus be also in us.

XIX

ITS PLAN OF SALVATION

THE Bible is like a drama, with a distinct purpose running through it from beginning to end. It is clear, progressive and climacteric. A thin red line, as distinct as the theme of an oratorio, can be traced from The Protevangel at the gateway of paradise to the last vision of the Apocalypse, where the saints redeemed are represented as glorifying God for their robes washed and made white in the blood that cleanseth from all sin.

We follow this crimson trail through Chronicle and Psalm and Prophecy with ever-increasing interest, perceiving more and more in the light of multiplying altars and watch-fires that some supreme event approaches. Suddenly there is a gush of music from the Judean hills: "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth and good will among men!" The denouement is at hand! Yonder on Calvary the Hope of Israel, the Desire of all nations, dies in anguish, bearing the world's sin in his own body on the tree. Then another burst of music from the heavenly heights, "Worthy art thou to receive honour and glory and power and dominion forever and ever, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us by thy blood!" This is the plot of the tragedy; this is

the crimson path that runs from the gateway of Paradise to the City of God.

And the singular fact is that the story, thus related with a divine picturesqueness, makes a personal appeal to every man. It must needs be so; since every man is conscious of sin, of a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and of a desire to escape from it. "What shall I do to be saved?" is the cry of the sin-cursed race. And just here is where the Gospel of the Book "finds us."

Let it be said with all possible emphasis, that this Scriptural plan of salvation stands solitary and alone. There are other religions and other philosophies which undertake with less or greater success to solve important problems and suggest plans of right living; but there is no religion or philosophy outside of the Scriptures which suggests a rational mode of escape from the guilty past. All others are ineffectual at this point. Indeed not one of the Sacred Books of the false religions gives the slightest hint or intimation of any method of erasing the record of past sin. Here the Scriptures stand alone. We are saved by faith in the atoning blood; and without this shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

And what shall be said of the Central Figure of this drama? Has the adverse criticism of the centuries robbed us of Christ? Nay; he remains by common consent the peerless One. His name is "Wonderful." Wonderful in his birth! Wonderful in his life, a life condensed in the brief monograph, "He went about doing good." Wonderful in his death: as the infidel Rousseau said, "If the death

of Socrates was that of a sage the death of Jesus was that of a God!" And wonderful, surpassingly wonderful, in his influence through all the succeeding ages.

A Hall of Fame was recently dedicated in connection with one of our Universities, and many illustrious names have been inscribed upon its walls; but who would think of comparing any of them with Him? A company of English writers were once discussing the relative greatness of the world's famous teachers. "If Plato or Socrates or Epictetus or Marcus Aurelius or Sakya-muni were to enter here," said Charles Lamb, "we would immediately uncover in their presence; but if Jesus of Nazareth were to appear, we would all with one consent fall upon our knees before him!"

In his exile Napoleon said, "My life once shone with the brilliance of a diadem, but now who cares for me? Cæsar, Alexander and I dreamed of universal empire. Cæsar and Alexander, where are they? And I shall soon be forgotten. But Jesus stretches a dead hand across the centuries and rules the world. He was crucified eighteen hundred years ago, after founding an empire upon love; and at this hour millions would die for him!" It is true that the glory of his name increases with the passing of the years. His praises are sung by a multitude whose voice is as the sound of many waters:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

It is no marvel that a Book with such a plot and such a Hero should have withstood the fiercest attacks of its bitterest foes. The "impregnable rock of Scripture," as Gladstone called it, stands like Gibraltar with the wreck of many hostile fleets scattered about its base. It stands like Eddystone, despite all swirling tides and buffeting storms, casting a steady light for the guidance of perplexed mariners on dangerous seas. It stands and withstands, this round-tower of the King of kings, while over it floats with ever-increasing splendour the red banner of the Cross, which is the franchise and prophecy of the Golden Age.

XX

ITS ENEMIES

IT is not claimed for the friends of the Bible that they are perfect, only that they are trying to adjust themselves to its demands. They know, far better than their most censorious critics, how far short they fall of the splendid ideal set before them. But they keep on trying, like hill-climbers who make their weary way with much stumbling toward a palace on the distant heights. Thus trudging on, amid adverse judgments and with much confusion of face, they confidently hope for better things some day. Not counting themselves to have apprehended as though they were already perfect, they forget the things which are behind and reach forth unto those which are before and press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling. Theirs is no easy task—let those who think so try it—but the end crowns the work. "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

So much for the friends of the Bible. On the other hand, who are its enemies? The Book stands willing to be judged by the enemies it makes. It is undeniable that among them are many whose outward lives are beyond reproach: but it is equally un-

deniable that their clan includes all reckless and notorious evil-doers, all notorious thieves and adulterers, all habitual liars and blasphemers, all Sabbath breakers, all midnight revellers, all wilful opposers of law and order, all confirmed criminals, all incorrigible tramps and professional neer-do-weels. All these can, without fear of contradiction, be reckoned as enemies of the Bible. If an exception be found it occurs so rarely, and the exposure of its insincerity is so obvious as merely to confirm the rule.

But these are not all. Among the avowed or clandestine foes of Scripture are many who occupy honourable positions in society, places of authority in political life, college professorships, even pulpits and theological chairs. They are scrupulous in their observance of all the common proprieties and conventionalities. The astute cleverness of a score of such respectable men is more disastrous to the faith of the unwary than the blasphemous mouthings of a legion of disreputables. Nevertheless, they do not prevail. God's Word has come to stay; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

One of the provisions of the ancient code of Deuteronomy had to do with the preservation of fruit-trees; as follows: "When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them. Thou mayest eat of them; but thou shalt not cut them down (because the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat shalt thou destroy."

Our purpose in this reference is to draw a parallel between the anti-biblical critics of our time and those ancient destroyers of fruit trees. The world has always been divided into two hostile camps,—defenders of the Bible and its enemies. The fiercest wars in history serve to illustrate this division; as in the Crusades, where the clash of steel under the walls of Jerusalem was really a conflict between the Koran of the false prophet and the veritable Word of God.

This destroyer is always abroad in the land. No believer is allowed to rest in undisputed possession of any revealed truth. The poet Whittier's picture of "The Reformer" is full of suggestion:

"All grim and soiled and browned with tan
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,
Smiting the godless shrines of men
Along his path.

"The Church beneath her trembling dome
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm;
Wealth shook within his gilded home
In strange alarm.

"Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam;
Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,
As from a dream."

It were well if this woodman had designs only on "the godless shrines of men"; but unfortunately his axe is oftentimes laid at the root of the life-giving truths of our religion. He has invaded the Lord's orchard, despite the ancient rule of humanity

in war; and the goodly trees, under whose shadow our fathers took delight and whose fruit was sweet to their taste, give back the echo of his blows. In this however there is no occasion for alarm. The war against the Scriptures is as old as the memory of man. Voltaire's words, uttered more than a hundred years ago, have often been quoted; "I will go through your theological forest and girdle every tree; so that in a quarter of a century not a sapling shall be left to you." Where now is that axe-man? But the forest is standing and at last accounts the Lord's trees were still "full of sap." So Whittier continues:

"Take heart! The Waster builds again;
A charmèd life old Goodness hath.
The tares may perish, but the grain
Is not for death.

"God works in all things. All obey
His first propulsion from the night.
Wake thou, and watch. The world is grey
With morning light!"

The Bible is that Tree of Knowledge under which men of reverence sit to contemplate the great verities. If there be no standard of authority there can, obviously, be no certainty as to any truth. Jason in search of the Golden Fleece must be able to direct his going by the North Star, else all is "dead reckoning" and his ship drifts at the mercy of the winds.

There are only three conceivable seats of authority as to spiritual things:

One is "the infallible Church;" but the Church,

divided as it is and speaking with diverse tongues, must prove its infallibility before any thoughtful man can concede it.

Another is the Bible, our "infallible rule of faith and practice." We have laid down an antecedent presumption that God—assuming that there is a God—would not leave His children without some sort of trustworthy revelation of His holy will. The Bible, as we have seen, claims to be such a revelation; saying of itself that it was "written by holy men as they were moved by the Spirit of God."

Now suppose the Church and the Bible alike to be untrustworthy, what remains? The only other standard of authority is Reason or "the inner consciousness." But observe where this lands us; every man becomes an ultimate law unto himself. Could presumption further go? "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark!" We have rejected the infallible Church and the infallible Book, only to affix our faith to *an infallible Ego!*

In any event, however, they say the Bible must go. This is the logical conclusion of the anti-Biblical criticism of these days.

Farewell, old Book! The inexorable censor sits, like Jehoiakim before the fireplace in his summer house, Bible on knee and penknife in hand, calmly mutilating the only reliable franchise of our Christian hopes! Has it not occurred to those "snipers" who from behind their pulpits and theological chairs are accustomed to aim ill-grounded propositions against the Scriptures that—however insignificant the effect upon the impregnable rock—immortal souls are in

the range of their poisoned darts? They have turned the rejoicing of many a weak believer into tears of hopeless doubt, and taken from those who are abroad in the bleak wilderness of temptation their only weapon of defense, to wit, "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

Such axe-men are to-day the most zealous foes of Scripture. They do not depend upon the methods of open warfare. The troops of Ulysses are no longer hurled against the walls of Troy; it is the enemy in the belly of the wooden horse that menaces the city. The truth is no longer opposed with a challenge but with a rising inflection as in Genesis 3: 1, "Yea, hath God said?" The argument is urged with a more or less equivocal and left-handed denial of the supernatural factor in both the written and the Incarnate Word. Such a method of procedure is disingenuous, of course, and admittedly so; since along the lines of common honesty there is no serious effort to defend it.

This is precisely what Jesus foretold: "Many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many;" and again, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves!" The teaching of the apostles abounds in like admonitions, as where Peter says, "There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies; and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." This being so, it is the manifest duty of all Christians to be on their guard, and of all Christ's ministers to speak plainly

of the axe-men who thus subtly and treacherously oppose the truth.

To speak thus is not intolerance; else Christ and his apostles would not have led the way. Nor can it offend the faithful; since he who takes offense by putting on the garment pleads guilty, *ipso facto,* by confessing that it fits him.

The false prophet, as Jesus says, may be "known by his fruits;" not merely by his moral misdemeanors but by his way of putting things. The old-time infidel would have frankly thrown down his gauntlet on this wise, "The Bible is a fraud and Jesus is an impostor." Not so our modern strategist: he commands a large vocabulary of equivocal words and phrases. One touchstone, however, will always betray him. He denies that God has truthfully revealed himself either in the Scriptures or, by logical sequence, in Christ.

(1) He will tell you that he "believes the Bible"; but, pursuing the subject further, you discover that he is juggling with words. When he says "the Bible is true" he means only that it is occasionally so. When he calls it the "Word of God" he means only that it is one of many such words. When he talks about "inspiration" he means simply an inspiration common to the world's literature. And when he ascribes "divinity" to Christ, it is only the divinity which he shared with all others who are created in the image of God.

If words were coins such men would be liable to arrest for counterfeiting: and presumably they are thus liable in that Appellate Court where the term

honesty is not restricted to commercial transactions but has to do with the secret imaginations of the hearts of men.

(2) And if you still insist on the veracity of the Scriptures, this clever adversary will inquire with a lifting of his eyebrows, "Is your religion then the religion of a Book?" To this we may safely answer, "Why not?" It is the religion of the Bible as the ultimate and only authority concerning Christ and his Gospel. Suppose you ask him where he finds *his* standards of authority. If he rejects the Book which is the only accepted authority as to Christ, his only alternatives are to take either an infallible Church or an infallible *ego*. Out of this dilemma no escape is possible, except into the camp of the agnostics whose shibboleth is "I know not."

(3) Then he will probably ask why you lay such emphasis on "the question whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch or not?" And that will further disclose his utter disingenuousness: for nobody knows better than he that the question is not, "Who wrote the Scriptures?" but, "Are they true and trustworthy as coming from God?" The question is not as to the amanuensis who held the pen but as to the Divine Mind that moved it. It is indeed of slight moment who wrote the Pentateuch or Isaiah or any other portion of the Scriptures, except so far as their authorship is definitely stated in the Book itself; but it is of vital importance to know whether the claim which the Bible makes for itself is correct or not, to wit, that it was "inspired" (literally, God-breathed)

and transmitted through holy men who were moved by the Spirit of God.

(4) Next, this mask-wearer will ask "what difference a few unimportant mistakes can make with the broad doctrinal and ethical teachings of Scripture?" There again he is disingenuous. In fact he does not limit himself to "a few unimportant mistakes;" he really holds that Genesis is a compilation of myths and legends; Deuteronomy a wholesale forgery; the prophesies of no significant value, and the entire Book a mingled tissue of truth and falsehood. It is not a question of infinitesimals but of wholesale essentials. It is not a question of "specks in the marble of the Parthenon," but whether there ever was a Parthenon and, if so, whether it was really built of marble or only of wood, hay and stubble. The Bible as interpreted by such mischievous teachers is not "the best of books;" nay, so far from that, if one hundred of the most reliable volumes of current literature were placed beside it, the critics themselves being the judges, the Bible would be the least trustworthy of them all!

(5) You may then expect this ingenious, disingenuous disputant to inquire with an air of amazement, whether you "really believe there are no mistakes in the Bible?" To which you may safely answer, "No, there are no mistakes in the Bible; though there are mistakes such as might naturally be expected in the process of transmission and translation, in the King James version and in other current versions of it." Whereupon he will be pretty certain to say, "Oh, you mean you believe in the

inerrancy of the Original Autograph! Did you ever see it? And what have we practically to do with it?" At this point suppose you meet him with a similar question as to the Incarnate Word, "Did you ever see Christ? Did any living person ever see him? Did you ever hear anybody say that he had ever seen him? Why then believe in him at all?"

Attention is again called to the singular parallel between Christ and the Scriptures: (*a*) They are both alike called "the Word of God." (*b*) They are both theanthropic; that is, the Divine and human are inextricably blended in their fabric: yet not so as to prevent their absolute truth and faultlessness. (*c*) Both originals have vanished from sight; and are transmitted through succeeding ages only through the lives and labours of fallible men. (*d*) Nevertheless, we believe in the unseen Christ and thus believing "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And, for a like reason, we believe in the Original Autograph of the Scriptures as it left the pens of those inspired men. Despite all errors in the transmission of the two Words, written and incarnate, they both exist to-day in such substantial perfection as to be "profitable unto every good work" and wholly effective in guiding and saving men.

(6) But, says the clever controversialist, "What difference does it make whether the historical and scientific parts of Scripture are true or not, so long as its doctrinal and ethical propositions are reliable? Is not its purpose to save men?" The answer is plain; to say that the only purpose of the Scriptures

is salvation is pure assumption. They were intended to be "profitable in all things, so that a man may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work." And if they are not veracious in respect to science and history, what ground have we for committing ourselves to their spiritual guidance? *Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.* If the veracity of your witness is successfully impugned the only thing for him to do is to step down and out of the witness box. The Bible is not reliable any way unless it is trustworthy every way.

(7) "But," continues our specious opponent, "this is a question for experts. The points at issue are such as can only be determined by the profoundest scholarship. Would you set yourself against all progress and advanced erudition? Biblical critics are now engaged in their elaborate investigations; and it behooves the unlearned to patiently await their conclusions." Is there, then, no erudition except the microscopic skill to split a hair or analyze a fly-speck in the margin of the text? Or is there really a broader, deeper, higher, truer scholarship which can only be gotten in the secret place with God?

But suppose we take these men at their word and concede that wisdom will die with them, what are "the unshod people" to do meanwhile, whose souls are agonizing for a solution of the problems of eternal life? Must they hold in abeyance the great question, "What shall I do to be saved?" And how long are they to keep themselves in such suspense, hung up like Mohammed's coffin betwixt heaven and

earth? Have not "experts" been discussing these questions since the foundation of the world? And with what result? No, gentlemen; the Bible is the Book of the people, and its salvation is intended for all sorts and conditions of men. "Where are the wise? Where are the disputers of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of men?"

Specialists have their place; let them keep it. Our Lord's promise of the Holy Ghost, "He shall lead you into all truth," was not addressed to Doctors of Divinity and Theological Professors only but to all his disciples. The Bible is removed by that promise from the exclusive province of expert scholarship and placed within the universal ken. Let those who are open and avowed enemies of the Word pour on their destructive acids and kindle their hostile fires; meanwhile it behooves such as feel the just constraint of covenant vows to vindicate their loyalty to the Scriptures by approving and defending them. The people are themselves the jury in this case, as they were in the Lord's controversy on Mount Carmel where, as between Elijah and the priests of Baal, their verdict was, "The Lord he is the God!"

(8) "But you are mistaken," says our friend the enemy, "in asserting that our purpose is destructive. It may be that incidentally the faith of some has been shaken; but, whatever may have occurred in the past while we were clearing away the debris, we are now engaged in constructive work." So much the worse. You are right in your confession thus far; you have found a lot of lame people walking with crutches and, having persuaded them to throw

away their Bibles, it is high time that you should furnish some other support for their uncertain steps. But what do you propose? A new Bible? Aye, you tell us that under the clear blaze of your erudition the Bible has come to be "a new Book." It is indeed a new book; full of errors on all points within the cognizance of the senses, yet heralded by you as a trustworthy guide in matters beyond sight! The thinking world derides you. Is this the edifice which you have been so laboriously constructing? Is this your "refuge from the storm and shadow from the heat?" A Bible without ground of confidence? A religion without the supernatural? A Gospel without oracles? A Christianity without Christ? A Salvation without blood?

(9) "Nay, but we do not deny Christ," they say; "On the contrary we insist on loyalty to Christ. Our whole system is Christocentric. Back to Christ!" But back to what Christ? To the Christ of the Bible which you renounce? To the Christ who affixed his authoritative seal to the so-called "fables" of the Flood, of Lot's wife and of Jonah in the whale's belly? To the Christ who called the Scriptures "truth" and never breathed a word or syllable against their absolute inerrancy? To the Christ who said, "Search the Scriptures" (not for the purpose of disproving them but because) "in them ye think ye have eternal life and these are they which testify of me?" Or, in your process of "construction" are you giving the world a new Christ, too? One of your leaders recently said from his theological chair, "The time has come for a re-statement of the doc-

trine of Christ." *Timeo Danaos, dona ferentes.* We may be pardoned for affirming that, under the circumstances, it is not enough for you to say that you believe in Christ.

(10) However, we are privately advised by certain of these teachers that the truths of the New Theology are esoteric; that is, for private consumption and not to be declared on the house-tops. Worse and worse! There are no Eleusinian mysteries in the religion of Christ. "An highway shall be there and a way; and the wayfaring man though a fool shall not err therein." Did not the Master say, "Except ye become as a little child ye shall in no wise see the kingdom of God?" The man "in holy orders" who confidentially avows opinions which he dare not preach in the great congregation is false to his obligation to declare the whole counsel of God. More than that, he is a coward. If not, let him in vindication of his manhood, not to say of his Christianity, stand forth in the open and, whether men will hear or forbear, fearless of consequences and indifferent to tenure of office, pronounce the truth without mumbling or mouthing as the God whom he professes to serve has enabled him to understand it.

We are sadly in need of two particular classes of men in these days. On the one hand we need infidels, outspoken infidels, who will take their places in the open and lift up their banners against Zion. What has become of the atheists of former days? Where are the brave scoffers who defied Jehovah and ran headlong on the bosses of his shield?

Where is Goliath with his spear like a weaver's beam? Where are the fierce wolves of the wilderness? Alas, these are the degenerate days of wolves clad in sheep's clothing and mingling with the flock; of Doeg the Edomite skulking behind the altar; of Shimei in ambush throwing stones at the King.

On the other hand we need believers; out and out believers, who know the truth and knowing dare maintain. There is no room for epicenes, "middle-of-the-road" men, Redwalds with the motto, "*In utramque paratus,*" professing to stand on neutral ground while practically opposing themselves to Christ and the Scriptures. Everywhere the call is for men to follow him; men of conviction and of courage to speak forth the last atom of it; men who do not mince nor mumble in their utterance but by faith proclaim, "These things we know;" men who to the full measure of their light shine forth and withhold not aught of truth as God gives them to see it.

XXI

ITS INDESTRUCTIBILITY

AS far back as runneth the memory of man there has never been an hour of cessation in the attack upon the Scriptures as the Word of God.

The nineteenth century was ushered in amid a whirlwind of infidelity. In France the Reign of Terror had swept away all sanctions of the Moral Law. It was solemnly resolved in the Corps Legislatif that "There is no God." The Sabbath was erased from the statute books. The friends of The Encyclopædia were chanting requiems at the tomb of Christianity. All Europe followed the fashion. In our own country religion was at its lowest ebb. It is a matter of record that in the year 1800 there were only three professing Christians in Yale College. The author of the "Age of Reason," in which were presented all the stock arguments against the inerrancy of Scripture, brought his manuscript to Benjamin Franklin for review. "Do not unloose this tiger," said Franklin; "for if our people are what they are with the Bible, what would they be without it?" But the tiger was unloosed. Paine and his confreres appeared to have everything their own way. A tidal wave of unbelief swept over our

country. It seemed as if the fountains of the great deep were broken up.

The twentieth century has begun in the same way. He is indeed a purblind student of the past who does not perceive that Christianity has made magnificent progress; yet every step of that progress has been bitterly and stubbornly contested. There is, however, a startling contrast between the former methods and those of to-day. The assault is now from within the gates. The open and avowed leaders of infidelity are gone. Bradlaugh in England and Ingersoll in America were the last of the Old Guard. Open warfare has given way to strategy. The Trojan horse has been wheeled within the walls of the Church itself; where a body of militant critics, many of them wearing the sacred garb of theological professors and ministers of the Gospel, have been attempting to draw the bolts of the citadel. Here is a significant fact: there is not a fundamental truth of the Christian religion which has not recently been called in question and assailed by men in holy orders, that is, by men solemnly covenanted to uphold and defend those very truths. The objective point of the assault is now as ever the integrity of Holy Writ. For it is well and rightly understood that if the citadel be overthrown the city itself must fall.

What is the result? It might easily be supposed from the blowing of trumpets and beating of drums, and from the frequent claim that all scholarship is arrayed against the credibility of the Scriptures, that the Lord of the Scriptures had himself retired from

the field. But he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh! The thing that hath been shall be. Despite the boastful prophecy of Voltaire there are saplings still growing in the forest of God. There is a multitude of reverent scholars who stand for the ancient landmarks without trumpeting their achievements or blazoning them on the dead walls, and there is an innumerable host of devout people who are in no danger of being taken up in the lips of talkers. The Lord reigns and the citadel is safe. The heart of the universal Church beats true to the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Word of God.

Let us observe how or wherein this continuous assault upon the Scriptures has affected their integrity if at all.

As to the Scientific propositions of Scripture enough has already been said, so that a word here will suffice. It is claimed in some quarters, with much noisy vociferation, that the leading scientists of recent times are all arrayed against the Book. This can be conceded only on the assumption that a scientist becomes a "leading" scientist merely by virtue of his unbelief. Otherwise the statement is denied *in toto*. What of Descartes and Locke? What of Sir Isaac Newton and Michael Faraday? What of Dana and Agassiz and Lord Kelvin? The last words of Professor Dana to the members of my class at graduation are worth repeating: "Young men, you are going out into a world where you must meet an unceasing assault upon your faith. Let me ask you to remember, as my parting counsel, that whenever you are in doubt amid the confused voices

of scientific controversy you may always with perfect confidence affix your faith to the statements of the Word of God."

The one proposition of the Scriptures which has challenged contradiction is its doctrine of Origins, to wit, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." To offset this the doctrinaires have suggested a theory of evolution which, it is asserted, is now "universally accepted." So far is this from being true that we may safely leave the disposition of the evolution theory to scientists themselves, since it is most vigorously opposed in that quarter. Charles Darwin, head-master of the Guild, was frank to admit that evolution is as yet a mere hypothesis. We may be excused for insisting that, under such circumstances, the shout of victory on the part of those who deny the Mosaic cosmogony is somewhat premature. The age-old view of the creation has not been nor can it ever be overthrown by guess-work. The guns that batter down the pyramids must be charged with other ammunition than the stuff that dreams are made of.

Nor have the efforts of the experimentalists met with any better success. They have much to say of autogenesis, or a beginning without God. As an old-fashioned believer I for one am ready to surrender my faith in the Biblical doctrine of origins so soon as one of these experimentalists shall create a single grain of sand. Surely this is not overmuch to ask of men whose magic deals with worlds and universes! Let them produce a daisy or a caterpillar, to begin with. Until some such result shall have been at-

tained, we may be pardoned for standing by the old manifesto, "In the beginning God."

The same is true of the assaults made upon the historicity of the Biblical annals. Attention has already been called to this point. Suffice it here to say that not a single record of the slightest importance in the Pentateuch or other historical books of Scripture has ever been successfully impugned; while on the contrary the researches of archæologists are continually verifying them.

The Theology of the Book also stands as the valid philosophy of God. There are no atheists nowadays. The infidelity of the last half century has not busied itself in denying the true God so much as in making new gods. The Pagan world has still its pantheon of idols formed of wood and stone; but of late civilized idolaters are industriously making gods out of the gray matter of their own fantastic brains. These are none the less idols; since having eyes they see not, and having ears they hear not. Any god except the God who has revealed himself in the Scriptures will answer for a modern free-thinker. Law, Force, Energy, the All-pervading Soul of the Universe, a "Something not ourselves that maketh for Righteousness," what matters it which of these you prefer? They are all specters; dull, senseless, inanimate things. In vain do their devotees cry, "O Baal, hear us!" There is no voice, nor answer nor any that regardeth.

> "An immense solitary Specter stands!
> It hath no shape, it hath no sound,
> It hath no place, it hath no time;

It is and was and shall be;
It is never more nor less, nor sad nor glad;
Its name is Nothingness!
Power walketh high and Misery doth crawl,
The clepsydron drips, the sands
Fall down in the hour glass,
And the hands around the dial sweep.
The Specter saith 'I wait!'
And at the last it beckons, and they pass.
And still the red sands fall within the glass,
And still the hands around the dial sweep,
And still the waterclock doth drip and weep;
And that is all!"

The result is precisely what it was in ancient Greece; in the midst of innumerable shrines and statues stands an altar representing the consummate fruit of human wisdom, inscribed, "To the unknown God!" And still from Mars' Hill ring out the words; "Him whom ye ignorantly worship, declare we unto you!" The God of the Bible remains as the only God who satisfies human need. He alone controls the destinies of nations and the children of men. He alone gives beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. This is the God of the Scriptures; and there is none other beside him.

The Ethics of the Scriptures are the juridicial basis of Civilization throughout the world. How much of its Moral Code has perished in the hot fires of the centuries? Not one jot or tittle of it!

Its singular Plan of Salvation is the only answer which has ever been suggested to the question, "How can a man be just with God?" The crux of the argument is the Cross. It is the one supreme

unanswerable guaranty of the perpetuity of the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God.

A century and a half ago Lord Chesterfield, while visiting Paris, was entertained at the table of a distinguished lady of The Encyclopædia. She said to him, "My lord, I am informed that your English Parliament is composed of five or six hundred of the most profound and brilliant thinkers. This being so, will you explain how it is that, under their authority, the Bible is still recognized as final authority in the legislation of your country, and how it is that the obsolete religion of the crucified Nazarene is maintained as your State religion?" His answer was, "Madam, this is a mere temporary makeshift; we are casting about for something better; and when we discover it, the Bible and Christianity will certainly give way."

The world has been casting about during all these centuries for something better and has not yet discovered it. And the thing that hath been, will be. Dreamers will still dream on; undevout thinkers will pursue their hopeless quest; kings and potentates will continue their search for a new and better religion as they have hitherto done by the light of Smithfield fires and autos-da-fe; but thoughtful and reverent men and women will go on loving their Bibles. The troubled will run for comfort to this shelter as to the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Sinners will search the Scriptures for a clear hope of salvation and find it under the Cross. For there is no weapon in the arsenal of unbelief that can prevail against the Yea and Amen of the living God.

AFTERWORD

I HAVE one more reason for maintaining and defending the truth of the Scriptures and it is a purely personal one. Its value is set forth in a homely old proverb which says, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating." No amount of argument in behalf of Revelation—or of any other proposition, for that matter—will avail for those who decline to taste and see for themselves. Philip's argument with Nathaniel as to the Messiahship of Jesus reached its logical conclusion in the words, "Come and see." God himself is practically nothing to one who refuses to entertain him.

It is five and forty years since the writer, then a young theologue, found himself and his calling at the death-bed of a stranger. So long ago did the old Book "find me" (Thanks, Coleridge, for that word!) and never once in these five and forty years has it failed me.

(1) The longer I live and the more familiar I become with the arguments for and against the trustworthiness of the Book the more firmly do I believe it. A Christian who stands braced against "the impregnable rock" (Thanks, Gladstone, for that phrase!) is not likely to be moved by a procession of players on instruments trumpeting as they pass.

I have lived to see the former positions of the anti-biblical critics abandoned, almost without exception,

one by one. The "new ground" which they now professedly occupy is so far from being new that their campfires are kindled in the very ashpits left by Paine and Voltaire more than a century ago. But there is this difference; whereas the banners that floated over the old-time encampment wore the bold legend, "We are infidels," they now read, "We are Christians." These foes of Scripture call themselves "progressive." I too believe in progress; but, because I have studied the singular habits of the hermit crab, I much prefer to call myself conservative. The comets, doubtless, as they whizz through infinite space with a freedom that knows no rhyme nor reason, make sport of the planets that move contentedly in their so ancient orbits; but what care the old-fashioned planets so long as they laugh last? The great body of believers in the universal Church are progressive-conservatives, moving on but never so rapidly as to exceed the speed-limit as indicated by the progress of the pillar of cloud.

The advanced liberals are relatively few but "behold what a great fire a little spark kindleth!" Not content to walk in sunlight they propose to drive the chariot of the sun. To them the lesson of Phœbus is as meaningless as the "fables" of the Old Testament and the "myths and legends" of the New. I for one can see no reason for falling in with their views. The company of those who "just know, and know no more, their Bibles true" is more congenial for any humble follower of Christ. He believed the Bible, knew it by heart, loved it, preached it, practiced it, commended it to his disciples as the means

of evangelizing the world, and never once in all his ministry spoke a word or syllable against its absolute truth and trustworthiness. The Book which my Lord and Saviour thus approved is good enough for me.

I am not unaware of the difficulties which confront one who thus accepts the Bible with its presentations of spiritual truth. The problems which lie beyond the purview of the five physical senses are not to be cut like Gordian knots. Their solution calls for the exercise of faith; a sixth sense with which man alone, in distinction from all the lower orders of life, has been equipped so that he might apprehend the things which are unseen and eternal. But, "the carnal mind is enmity against God," and by the same token against all the truths which centre in him. We are naturally averse to accepting what we cannot see and handle. Hence the difficulty which always besets us in approaching the verities of the spiritual life.

Nevertheless to my mind it is easier to accept the Scriptures as inerrant than to believe that a loving God would leave his bewildered children to wander in a world of confused voices without a trustworthy guide. No such guide is found in reason, in conscience, in hierarchial "infallibility," in the so-called Sacred Books of the false religions or anywhere else. There are unimportant diversities and discrepancies in each and all of the many hundreds of Scriptural versions in the world to-day. But what else should be looked for? It is easier for one—incomparably easier—to believe that God did once really and authoritatively speak through "holy men

who wrote as they were moved by his Spirit," and that the Word thus written has been preserved by a special providence in essential purity as we now have it, than to believe in a God who would leave us to blunder on through a labyrinthine life into the great unknown with no adequate effort to direct us along the way.

To speak more specifically, now, of the three great doctrines of the Book; namely, a personal God, holy, just and good; a man with a divine birthright, but fallen into sin and thereby alienated from God; and the God-man, through whom an at-one-ment is effected between God and man.

These three doctrines, containing the sum and substance of Scripture as set forth in the teachings of Christ, are all subtly or avowedly denied by the advanced liberalism of our time. The personal God is reduced to an impersonal force which is scarcely the specter of a god. The man whom the Scriptures represent as created in the likeness of God, was not created at all but evolved from the lower orders of life and, as the creature of heredity and environment, is an utterly irresponsible being. And the God-man is no God-man but a mere man posing as God and therefore impotent to save. Thus the whole doctrinal system of the Scriptures is more or less politely bowed out of doors.

Not infrequently this is done by men in holy orders and under covenant vows. As an honest man I do not like to contemplate this fact. As a man of average common-sense I am unable to understand it. As a Christian I recoil from it. As a conserva-

tive I find it easier to accept each and all of the great doctrines referred to than to reject them in the manner indicated, notwithstanding the mysteries involved in the necessity of the case.

In order to reject the God of the Scriptures I should have to believe in effects without causes, in design without a designer and in law without a lawgiver. However great my faith may be—or call it credulity if you prefer—it is not equal to the strain thus put upon it.

In order to reject the Scriptural doctrine of man I should have to believe in a theory of evolution which is confessedly a mere hypothesis, in the irresponsibility of a being equipped with a sovereign will, and—notwithstanding the scientific fact of dynamic conservation—in the possible extinguishment of the mightiest of known forces. My progressive friend, in the name of science I protest that I cannot keep up with you.

In order to reject the Biblical doctrine of the God-man, I should have to affirm that Christ was either man alone or God alone. In the latter case I must follow in the footsteps of the Docetists whose untenable theory was exploded a thousand years ago. In the former case I must face an impossible dilemma. For if Christ was a mere man he must have been either a good man or a bad one. If he was a good man how shall I account for the fact that he arrogated to himself every one of the divine attributes, accepted the devotion due to God alone and died for making himself equal with God? It is equally difficult to believe that he was a bad man; for the whole

world pays tribute to his singularly blameless life and character. But we must believe something about him.

And there is no middle ground. He was either what he claimed to be or he was a shameless impostor who was justly sentenced to die on the accursed tree.

In view of these facts I say it is easier to believe in the Bible than to follow with those who reject it.

(2) But it is not enough to say, in looking back over these five and forty years, that the Bible has forced itself on my confidence by its intrinsic reasonableness. *I have seen it making men:* and I have cherished the hope that it might ultimately build me up into "the fulness of the measure of the stature of a man." My own many and most lamentable failures and shortcomings have served the more to emphasize its reliability as an "infallible rule of faith and practice."

When Jesus said to his disciples, "Search the Scriptures" he went on to give them a good and sufficient reason for doing so; namely, because "in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." He thus intimated that he himself is the secret of eternal life; and so, in my observation and personal experience, have I found him. The measure of our success in the building of character is our intimacy with the Incarnate Word as revealed in the written Word of God.

To neglect the Bible, then, is to invite leanness of soul. This Book is the lattice from behind which the Shepherd looks out upon the Shulamite maid.

His promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway;" but there are times when our eyes are so holden that we cannot see him. We can always, however, catch the vision by opening the Book. It is in the faithful and habitual searching of the Scriptures that we keep up an unbroken friendship and fellowship with him. The Rock upon which our faith fastens its flukes may be invisible; but, laying our hand upon the anchor chain, we are assured by the throbbing of its mystic current that our faith is still secure, "taking hold of that which is within the veil."

(3) Nor yet, in looking backward, is it enough to say that I have believed the Scriptures and have endeavoured to translate them into the terms of common life and character; it is only fair to add that, as a minister under bonds to "preach the Word," I have, in all good conscience sought in this manner to commend it to my fellow-men.

The temptations to do otherwise are specious and multifarious. There is no lack of "people with itching ears" who go about from one sanctuary to another in search of "preaching for the times"; and the newspaper announcements of church services indicate that they have no difficulty in finding it. The homiletic shoemaker who, instead of sticking to his last, becomes a jack-of-all-trades is certain to be master of none. His coign of vantage is the Word. In art, science and philosophy he is only a novice at best; and when he ventures into politics he is smilingly compassionated by editors and others who make a business of it. The result of such poaching on alien preserves is usually not that "foolish-

ness of preaching" which is the power of God unto salvation, but the preaching of foolishness which neither saves nor helps anybody and has its labour for its pains.

But the minister who stands by his commission in the preaching of the Word is on his native heath. Nor—assuming fair ability and reasonable industry—will he lack an audience; since the deepest longing in the soul of the average man is to know the way of salvation as indicated in the Oracles. The people who come to church do not care particularly to hear what the preacher thinks about this, that or the other thing: but they are deeply concerned in knowing the mind of God.

The prevailing passion for sensationalism has much to do with the decline of pulpit power in these days. All sorts of adventitous helps are resorted to in the effort to gain a hearing; as if an audience were worth while except for what the preachers can do with it. And the flying trapeze is sure to lose in the long run. The only sensationalism which is permissible in the pulpit is that which borrows its lightning from the bolts of heaven.

We profess to believe in God. It is for us to preach Theology so that our hearers shall realize the divine personality as vividly as Pharoah did when Moses proclaimed the name of Jehovah before him.

We profess to believe in Man divinely born and alienated from God. It is for us to paint sin so black that sinners, pricked to the heart, will be forced to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" If Nathan the prophet had followed the custom which

obtains in some quarters nowadays, he would have closed his discourse with the Parable of the Little Ewe Lamb and gone away with the congratulations of the king and his courtiers on having delivered "a beautiful sermon": but the Parable of the Little Ewe Lamb was only the feather of a shaft that, flying from the prophet's bow, smote David in the region of the heart and sent him staggering to his closet in the housetop with the cry, "Have mercy, O God, for I have sinned against thee!"

We profess to believe in Christ as the only Saviour from the penalty and power of sin. In pursuance of that belief we preach the *Incarnation:* "Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in flesh!" We preach the *Atonement,* pointing to the Cross as Moses pointed the dying Israelites to the effigy of the brazen serpent with the cry, "Look and live!" We preach the *Resurrection;* that is, life and immortality brought to light in him who, rising from the sepulchre in Joseph's garden, entered heaven in our behalf with the keys of death and hell at his girdle.

These are some of the truths which we are commissioned to preach. They open up from a thousand standpoints in infinite variety but always point one way. Behold the Cross! And Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me." He is the great magnet. His is the drawing power. Is it sensationalism we want? The tragedy of his self-denying love in our behalf is the sensation of the ages!

What opportunities are here for enchaining the attention and capturing the hearts of men! The

Bible presents us with a quivering chain of sensations from beginning to end. Alas, the fault is ours! We preachers are so prone to dulness; and dulness in the pulpit is an unpardonable sin. What we need is, not to lead our congregation into pastures new, but to acquaint ourselves more intimately with the green fields that lie along the water of life. Lord, open thou thy Word to the shepherds of Israel!

So, in the experience of the years, the power of the Bible has increasingly taught me the truth of it. In this little volume I have tried to give my reasons for believing it, for adjusting my life to it, and for preaching it. If a single reader be led thereby to place a deeper and sweeter confidence in my Saviour's Book I shall be glad and happy.

Dear Bible! Book of the Church militant and triumphant; Book that our fathers touched with reverent hands and our mothers stained with grateful tears; Book that no bonfires have been able to consume nor fuming acids to impair; Book of comfort for the sorrowing, of strength for the weary, of courage for the living and hope for the dying; my Saviour's Book and mine; if I forget thee may my right hand forget its cunning! If I preach thee not, may the living coal no longer kindle on my lips! May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I find not in thy saving truths my chiefest joy!

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